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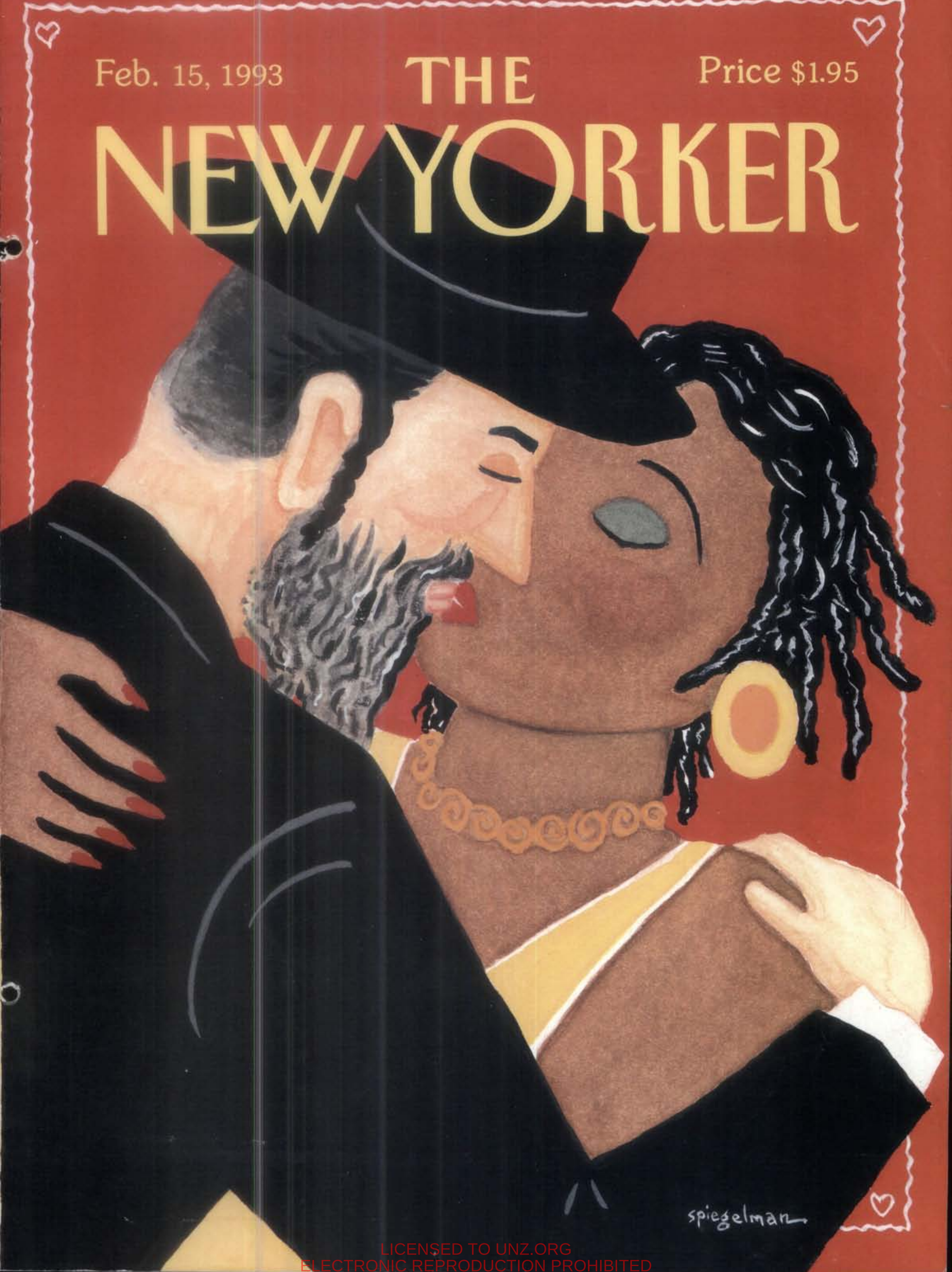
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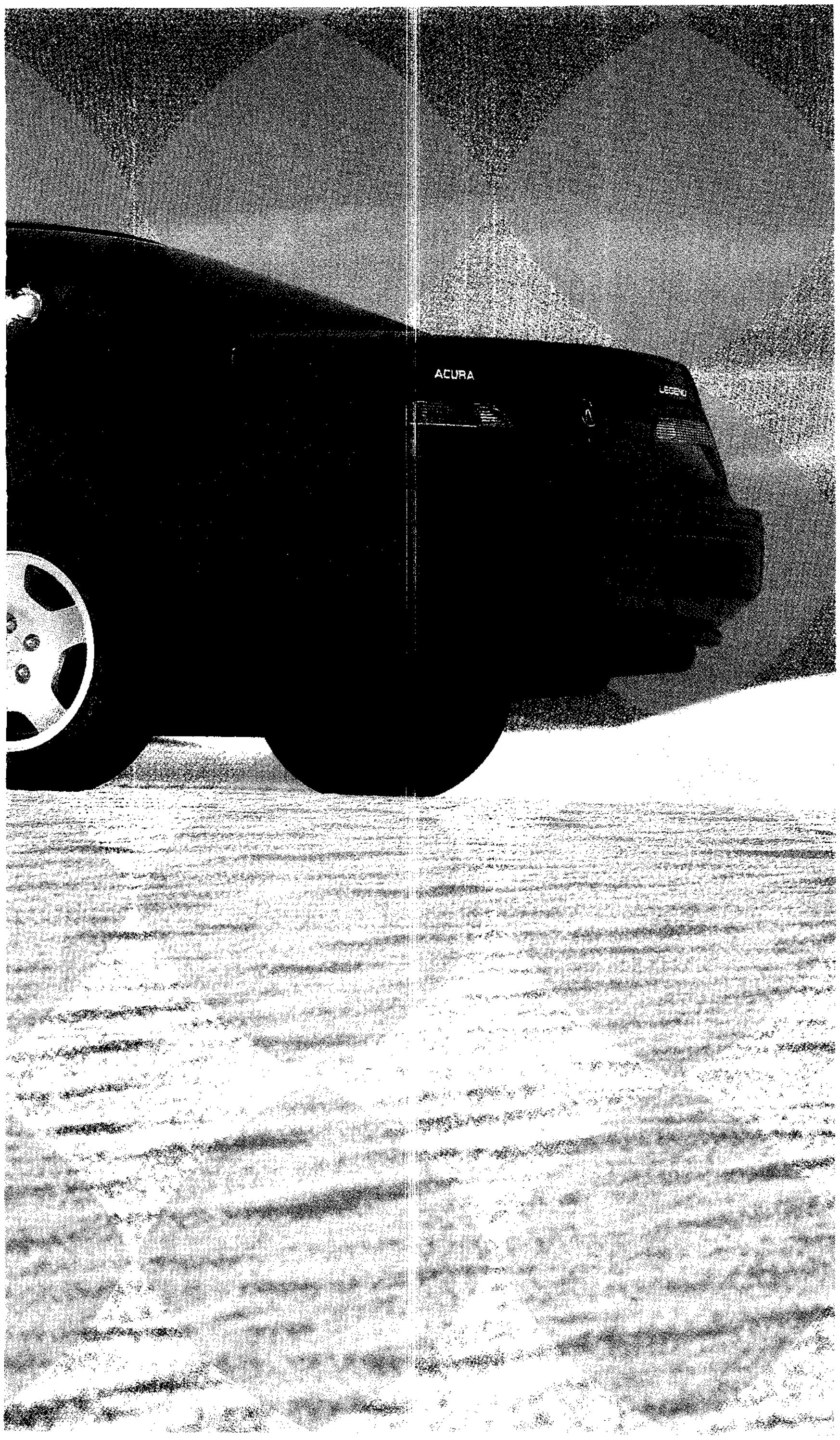

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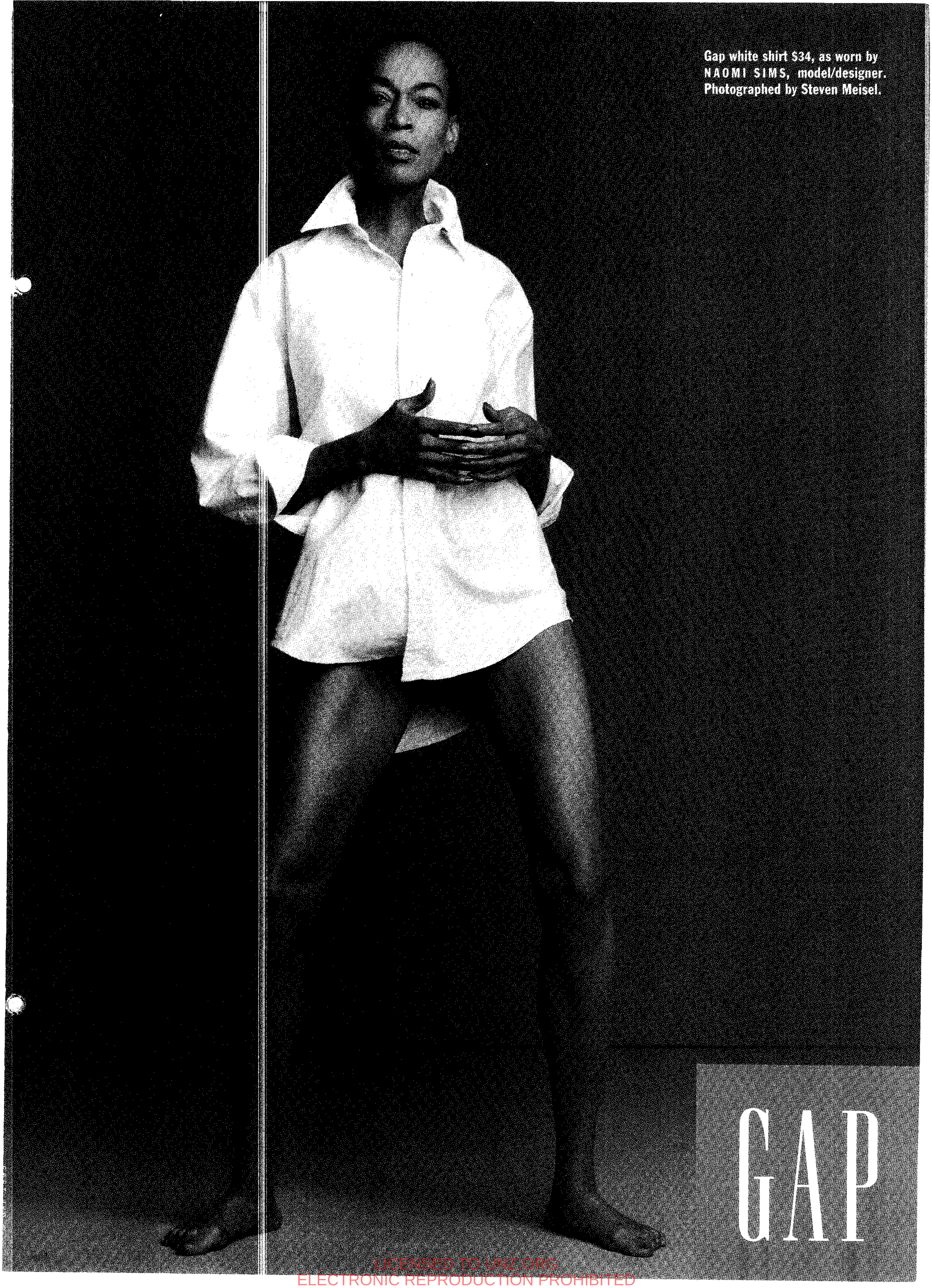

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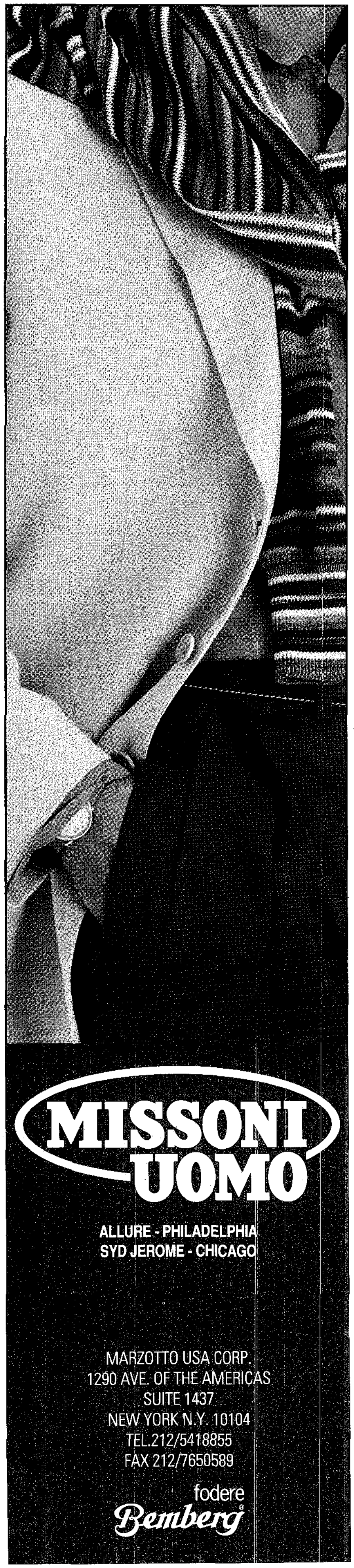
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COMMENT

CLEARANCES

For most of the first two weeks of his newborn Administration, President Clinton found himself embroiled in a fight over his emphatically and frequently expressed intention of changing the Pentagon's policy of barring from military service men and women whose sole offense is to acknowledge their identity as homosexuals. Under pressure from opponents in Congress and in the armed services, Mr. Clinton has now agreed to a temporary truce: he will hold off lifting the ban for six months, during which the Senate Armed Services Committee will hold hearings, the Pentagon will draft an executive order, and military recruiters will stop asking volunteers about their sexual orientation. The President nevertheless seems determined to eventually right the wrong whereby an entire class of citizens, on the basis of nothing more than an involuntary orientation, is excluded from an opportunity that is fundamental to full, first-class citizenship. In the meantime, there are other ways in which prejudice against homosexuals manifests itself in the operations of the federal government, and with these there is no need to compromise.

As hundreds of appointees to the new Administration are about to discover, getting "the call" is only the first step in obtaining an important government job. Before they can settle into their new positions, they will have to undergo a background investigation and be "cleared" by one or more of the federal government's investigative agencies. Those new appointees who will need security clearances for access to classified information will face particularly extensive scrutiny, by special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Outside the uniformed military, no single federal regulation governs whether homosexuals may be cleared for government jobs. Different parts of the government have different sets of rules, mostly vague and sometimes bizarre. For example, one rule states that federal investigators doing background checks should not question appointees "concerning their sexual behavior or attitudes concerning sexual conduct in the absence of allegations or information indicating sexual misbehavior." The regulations do not define "sexual misbehavior." In contrast, people who work for defense contractors may be denied security clear-

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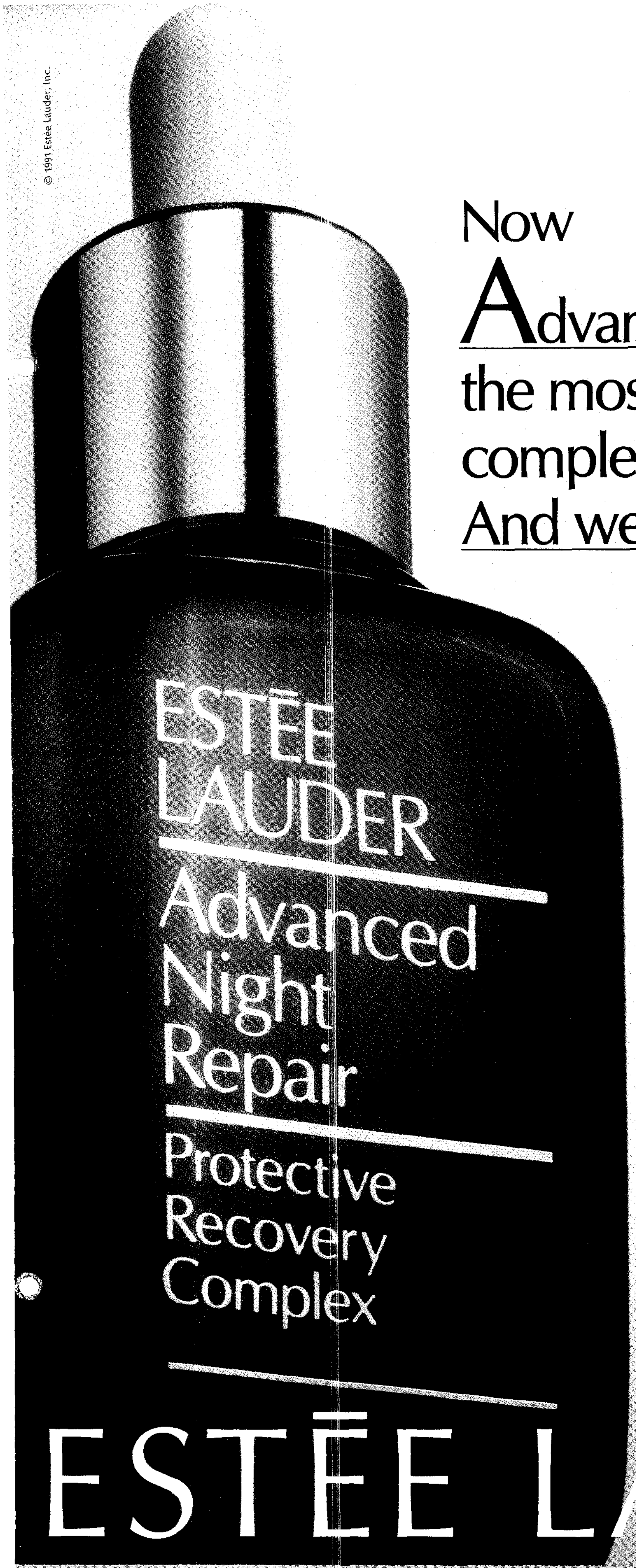

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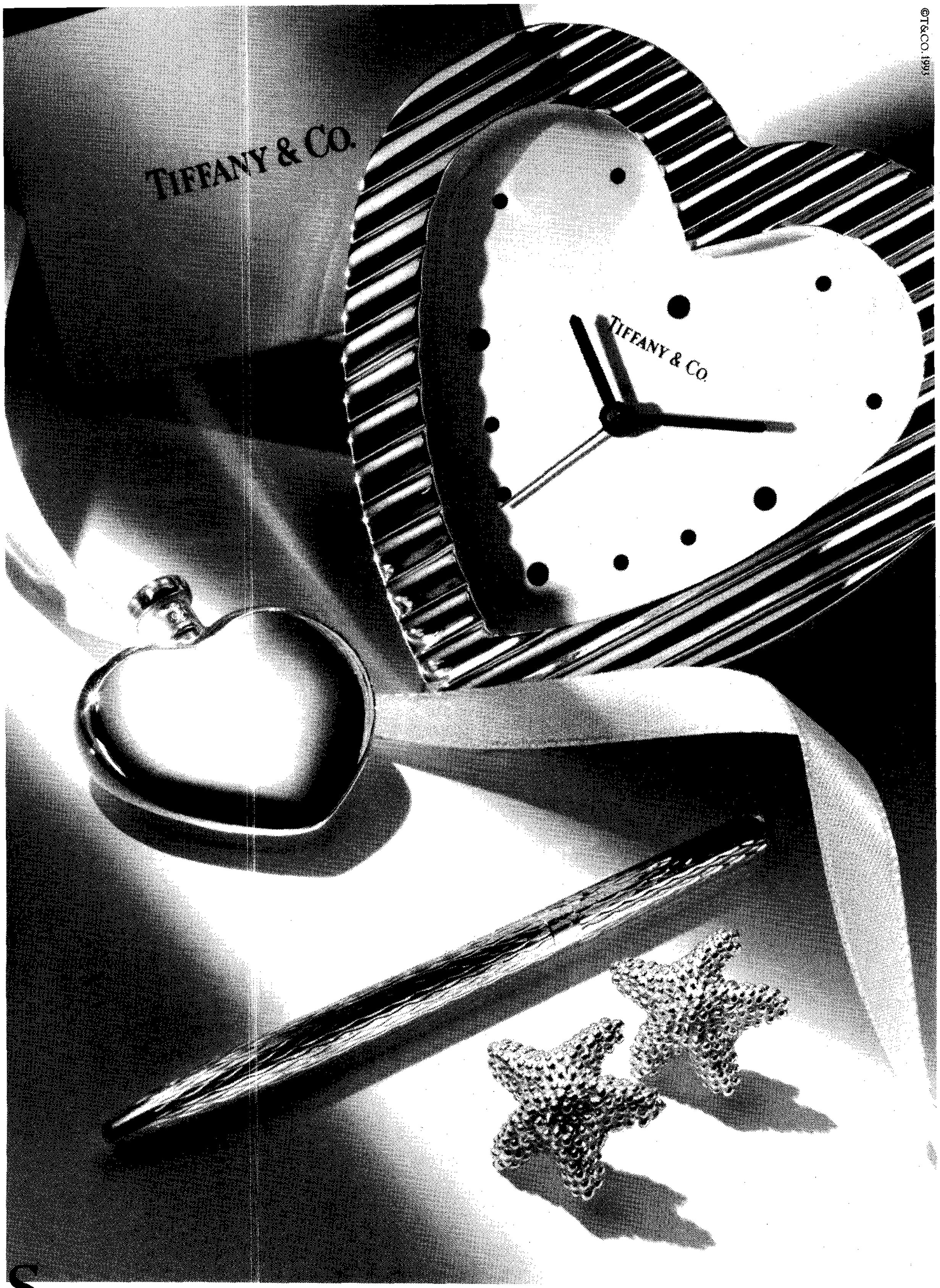
ances for "sexual misconduct," which *is* defined, feverishly, in the relevant federal regulation as "all indications of moral turpitude, heterosexual promiscuity, aberrant, deviant or bizarre sexual conduct or behavior, transvestitism, transsexualism, indecent exposure, rape, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, child molestation, wife-swapping, window peeping, and similar situations from whatever source."

It's a lunatic list—an overwrought mixture of the trivial and the heinous. But if the wording of such rules is confused their effect is not. For example, evidence in recent court cases demonstrates that, despite occasional public comment to the contrary, both the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. have long had policies of hiring no one known to be gay, whether open or closeted, for any position. Homosexual employees of some agencies, like the Justice Department, say they are subject to longer and more detailed background checks than heterosexuals. Other agencies are more furtively bigoted; the Foreign Service, for example, has demonstrated that individuals who have engaged in homosexual "conduct," though not all homosexuals, may be fired—a presumptuous distinction to be made by an employer that does not have round-the-clock custody of its employees. The net result of the rules is a pattern of discrimination that is more haphazard than the military's flat-out ban on homosexuals but may also be more insidious. "Thousands of gay people have high-level security clearances," William B. Rubenstein, the director of the Lesbian and Gay Rights Project of the American Civil Liberties Union, has said. "That so many gay people wind up getting clearances shows how arbitrary and vindictive the rules are."

The arguments currently being offered in favor of discrimination against homosexuals in the military—the alleged threat to morale and discipline in the enforced propinquity of barracks life—have no relevance elsewhere in the government, where the traditional justification for denying gay people clearances is that their status renders them particularly susceptible to blackmail. There is some question whether that rationale was ever legitimate, and it is even flimsier now that homosexuality is so much less heavily stigmatized than it used to be. There is no record of a foreign nation's ever successfully recruiting an American homosexual spy through the use of blackmail. A 1986 study by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence found that Americans' most common motive for becoming spies was not blackmail but "financial gain, often combined with conscious or unconscious anger at the employer." Still, the blackmail rationale endures, and in a case decided in 1990 it was the sole basis of the federal government's most comprehensive court defense of its discriminatory practices. In the case, which was heard in San Francisco, under the piquant title of High Tech Gays v. Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office (an organization whose acronym, deliciously, is DISCO), a group of gay men who worked for defense contractors unsuccessfully challenged Defense Department rules that limited their ability to obtain security clearances. On appeal, the court agreed with the government that the discriminatory practices had a "rational basis." The government's evidence that the discrimination was rational—that gays were more likely to be approached than heterosexuals—came in part from testimony at the court-martial of Sergeant Clayton J. Lonetree, a Marine guard at the United States Embassy in Moscow who spied for the K.G.B. Ironically, nowhere in its opinion did the court mention that Sergeant Lonetree was recruited as a spy by his Soviet lover, a woman.

Not surprisingly, then, support for discriminatory rules is diminishing fast. A little-noticed government report issued in January underlines just how dramatic the changes have been. A special panel that was appointed last May by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and included two retired Army generals—Andrew J. Goodpaster, a former superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point, and Richard G. Trefry, who was a military assistant to President Bush—found that "homosexuals, 'in or out of the closet,' are no more vulnerable to coercion or blackmail than heterosexuals." As a result, the panel recommended that "no agency of the Federal Government deny, on the basis of potential vulnerability, security clearances to civilian employees of the Federal Civil Service . . . solely on account of their homosexuality or sexual orientation." The changes in attitudes reflected in documents like this one are so enormous—and so encouraging—that it is tempting to assume that American society will continue to become a more tolerant place. President Clinton's nomination, last Tuesday, of Roberta Achtenberg, a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, to be assistant secretary for fair housing and equal opportunity in the Department of Housing and Urban Development is a promising sign that in the civilian agencies, at least, official anti-gay policies really will be wiped from the government's books: Ms. Achtenberg, a lesbian, will be the highest-ranking openly gay official ever to serve in the executive branch. Perhaps she can help show some of her new colleagues, the ones who are housed in the Pentagon, that there really isn't anything to be afraid of. ♦

EDITORS' NOTE: The painting on the cover of this issue of *The New Yorker* is by Art Spiegelman, whose "Maus," a two-volume narrative of the Holocaust in comic-book form, was awarded a special Pulitzer Prize in 1992. About the painting, which is Mr. Spiegelman's first work for the magazine's cover, the artist writes, "This metaphoric embrace is my Valentine card to New York, a wish for the reconciliation of seemingly unbridgeable differences in the form of a symbolic kiss. It is a dream, of course—in no way intended as any kind of programmatic solution. The rendering of my dream is intentionally, knowingly naïve, as is, perhaps, the underlying wish that people closed off from one another by anger and fear—Serbs and Croats, Hindus and Muslims, Arabs and Israelis, West Indians and Hasidic Jews—could somehow just 'kiss and make up.' Though I'm a maker of graven images by profession, I respect the fact that in the real world, the world beyond the borders of my picture, a Hasidic Jew is proscribed from embracing a woman outside his sect and his family. (I won't disingenuously attempt to claim that the woman in my painting is his wife, an Ethiopian Jew.) I'm also painfully aware that the calamities facing black communities in New York cannot be kissed away. But once a year, perhaps, it's permissible, even if just for a moment, to close one's eyes, see beyond the tragic complexities of modern life, and imagine that it might really be true that 'All you need is love.' "



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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14	15	16				

THE THEATRE

Curtain Up

ALTHOUGH it's only February, it's probably safe to say that "Make Way for Tomorrow"—a thematic revue performed by Broadway stars during the inaugural festivities last month and excerpted last week for the Clintons' first state dinner—will go down as one of the year's most exuberant theatrical presentations. It was the only place in Washington during gala week where you could hear Carol Channing vamp through the topical, naughty "Little Girl from Little Rock"; the only place where you could hear Tyne Daly say of her political philosophy, "I'm certainly willing to speak out, but I'm no Eartha Kitt"; and the only place—or at least the first—where you could see Lauren Bacall perform officially.

"Make Way," which was directed by Richard Maltby, written by Barbara Handman and Phyllis Newman (who performed, too), and produced by Handman, Newman, Marty Bell, and Beverly Camhe, was also a good place to catch up on theatre news. Young Daisy Eagan ("The Secret Garden"), for example, said that she had an upcoming concert appearance with the New York City Gay Men's Chorus (March 21), and Howard McGillin said that he was involved in an animated film version of "Swan Lake." However, the most colorful performer—in a group that also included Harry Groener, Jodi Benson, Linda Lavin, and Savion Glover—was Larry Gatlin. Gatlin, who takes over the lead in "The Will Rogers Follies" on February 16, disposed of a particularly high-voiced colleague with the remark, "He could sing tenor to a dog whistle."

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for schedule and ticket information.)

Dear Liar—Julie Harris and Alvin Epstein in a one-night-only, benefit performance. The play, by Jerome Kilty, is based on the correspondence of George Bernard Shaw and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Fool Moon—A new comedy by Bill Irwin and David Shiner, with music provided by the Red Clay Ramblers. Previews begin Feb. 12. (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 221-1211.)

The Goodbye Girl—Bernadette Peters and Martin Short star in a new musical by Neil Simon (book), Marvin Hamlisch (score), and David Zippel (lyrics). Based on the 1977 movie. Previews begin Feb. 13. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

The Heliotrope Bouquet by Scott Joplin & Louis Chauvin—A play, with ragtime music, by Eric Overmyer. In previews. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

On the Open Road—A play by Steve Tesich, with Byron Jennings and Anthony LaPaglia. Previews through Feb. 14. Opens Feb. 16 at 8. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

Tapestry: The Music of Carole King—A theatrical concert performed by a cast of six singers and a six-member live band. In previews. (Union Square Theatre, 100 E. 17th St. 505-9251.)

Two Rooms—Laura Esterman and Jeffrey Hayenga in a play by Lee Blessing, presented by the Signature Theatre Company. Opens Feb. 12 at 8, and runs through March 7. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200.)

OPENED RECENTLY

Anna Christie—Girl meets Hunk. Girl loses Hunk. Girl finds Hunk. Terrific performances from Natasha Richardson and Liam Neeson as Girl and Hunk. David Leveaux directed. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/1/93.) (Criterion Center, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Feb. 28.)

The Boiler Room—A play by Reuben González. Three performances a week are in English; four are in Spanish. Staged by Alex Colón. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 354-1293. Closes Feb. 21.)

Born Guilty—Zach Grenier in Ari Roth's adaptation of a 1988 book by Peter Sichrovsky. (American Jewish Theatre, 307 W. 26th St. 633-9797. Closes Feb. 21.)

Bubbe Meises, Bubbe Stories—A musical in which a granddaughter recalls her grandmothers and their stories. Written by, and starring, Ellen Gould. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020.)

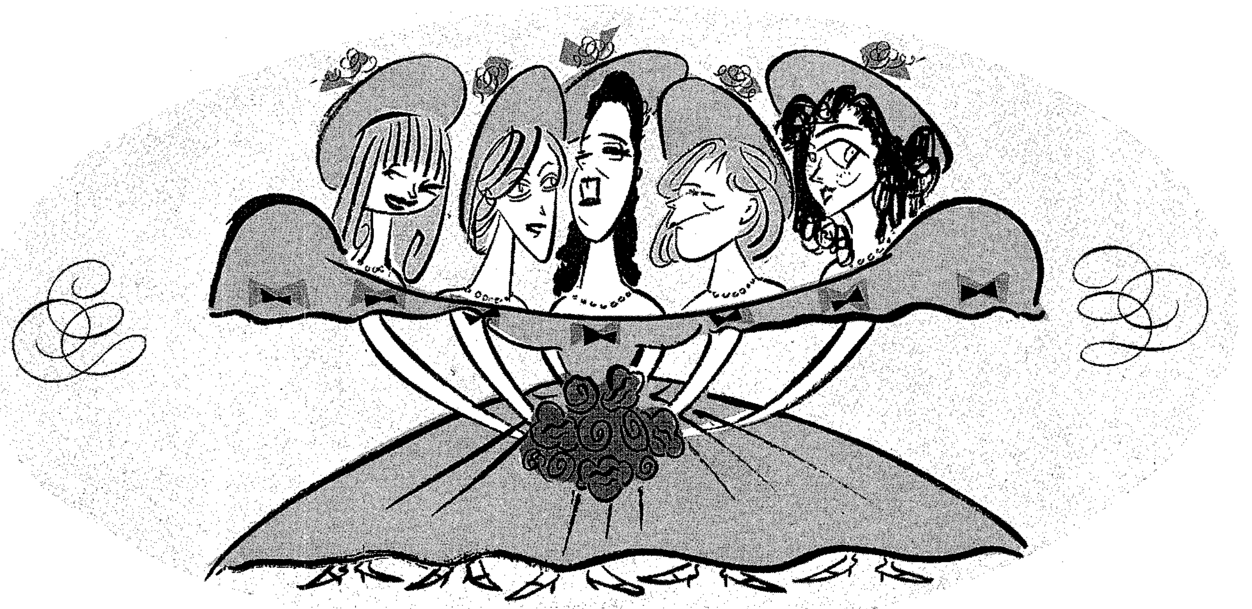
The Destiny of Me—Or "Confrontations with My Father." Larry Kramer's latest work is rarely less than involving, but the dramatic structure—a family-memory play grafted onto the present-day story of an exhausted, love-seeking AIDS activist—breaks down for good in the second act. Many people who stay for the third act, however, claim to be deeply moved by the conclusion. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)

Down the Shore—A play by Tom Donaghy, presented with a curtain-raiser, "The Dadshuttle." (Atlantic, 336 W. 20th St. 645-1242. Closes Feb. 20.)

Five Women Wearing the Same Dress—A play by Alan Ball about bridesmaids in a wedding in Knoxville, Tennessee. (Manhattan Class Company, 120 W. 28th St. 727-7765.)

Forbidden Broadway 1993—Once again, a galaxy of parodies that sharpen into satire. This new edition is as funny as most of its predecessors. Among the new shows under consideration are "Guys and Dolls" and "Falsettos," and among the holdovers are "Les Misérables" and "The Phantom of the Opera." Gerard Alessandrini, as if you had to be told, is the inspired writer and director, and Susanne Blakeslee, Dorothy Kiara, Brad Oscar, and Craig Wells are the splendid performers, doing a large assortment of roles. (1/25/93) (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

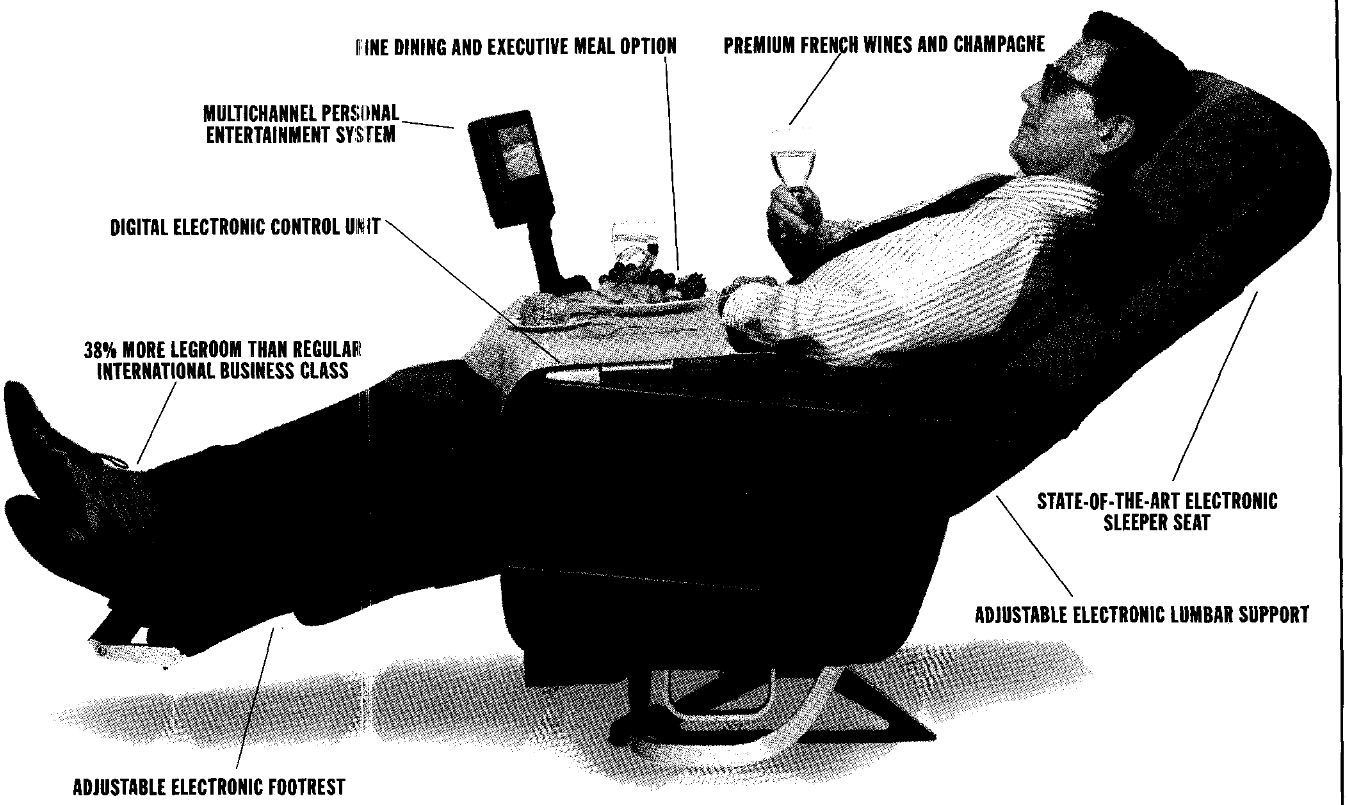
Get Hur—A whodunit by Ray Dobbins, presented by the British company Bloolips. Featuring Bette Bourne and Precious Pearl. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109.)



Dina Spybey, Ally Walker, Allison Janney, Amelia Campbell, and Betsy Aidem in "Five Women Wearing the Same Dress."

TOM BACHTELL

THE DIFFERENCE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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh—A musical based on the song parodies of Allan Sherman and offering further proof that Camp Lite is taking over Off Broadway. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330.)

Henry V—In the title role, Mark Rylance displays his verse-speaking ability, as well as unexpected comic timing, in this otherwise uneven Theatre for a New Audience production. Barry Kyle directed. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Closes Feb. 20.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting, in rotating rep: **THE IDIOT**, an adaptation, by David Fishelson, of Dostoevsky's novel; **THE CARETAKER**, by Harold Pinter; and Shakespeare's **MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.** (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jeffrey—A comedy, by Paul Rudnick, about love in the age of AIDS; with John Michael Higgins. It is less a fleshed-out play than a series of Scenes from Gay Life, but Mr. Rudnick can quip with the best of them. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523. Closes Feb. 14.)

The Last Yankee—The meeting of two couples in a mental hospital, where both wives are being treated for depression, is an occasion, needless to say, for a lecture by the playwright, Arthur Miller, on American competitiveness and other national shortcomings. Nevertheless, there are some good—even funny—scenes, and the performances under John Tillinger's direction are first-rate. John Heard and Tom Aldredge are the husbands, and Frances Conroy and Rose Gregorio are the wives. (2/1/93) (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Feb. 28.)

The Night Larry Kramer Kissed Me—A series of vignettes, by the rising writer/performer David Drake, about contemporary gay life. Mr. Drake is more gifted as a performer than as a writer, but his show is frequently absorbing—by turns silly and poignant. (Perry Street Theatre, 31 Perry St. 564-8038.)

Oleanna—David Mamet, in fine, curmudgeonly form, takes on political correctness, sexual harassment, and a number of other isms in this brief, powerful drama that continues to stir up the ideologues. The play's skepticism is as evenhanded as it is corrosive. With William H. Macy and Mary McCann. Not to be missed. (11/16/92) (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 307-4100.)

Saint Joan—The National Actors Theatre's production of Shaw's play, with Maryann Plunkett in the title role. Michael Langham directed. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Lyceum, 149 W. 45th St. 239-6280.)

Samuel's Major Problems—A play written and directed by Richard Foreman. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. For reservations, call 533-4650.)

Scapin—A musical production of Molière's comedy, which is lively to the point of mania. Rusty Magee wrote the undistinguished score and lyrics, and Andrei Belgrader, the director, is also partly responsible for the cheesy adaptation. Stanley Tucci is as busy as can be in the title role; his resemblance to Al Pacino does him no harm but not much good, either. Even Mary Testa as Zerbinette cannot rescue this mess. (CSC, 136 E. 13th St. 677-4210. Closes Feb. 21.)

The Sisters Rosensweig—Wendy Wasserstein's new play, a comedy with serious undertones, is about the reunion in London of three American Jewish sisters—an international banker, a travel writer, and a wife and mother who's a professional dispenser of advice. They are portrayed by Jane Alexander, Christine Estabrook, and Madeline Kahn. The spirit of Chekhov hovers but never intrudes. Laughter is continuous. (11/2/92) (Mitzi E. Newhouse, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Someone Who'll Watch Over Me—Alec McCowen (English), Stephen Rea (Irish), and James McDaniel (American) give stunning performances as hostages in Beirut in Frank McGuinness's moving and humorous play. Robin Lefèvre directed. (12/7/92) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Years—The meandering tale of a family and of two weddings and two muggings thirteen years apart. The play, by Cindy Lou Johnson, doesn't arrive at any destination to speak of, but the family members are interesting enough, especially a young fellow who seems to be just a put-upon factotum but mysteriously turns out to be an artist. With Paul McCrane, Frank Whaley, and Julie Hagerty, among others. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Closes Feb. 14.)

LONG RUNS

BEAU JEST: Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP/TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CONVERSATIONS WITH MY FATHER:** Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239 6200. . . . **FALSETTOS:** Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **FIVE GUYS NAMED MOE:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **FOREVER PLAID:** Steve McGraw's, 158 W. 72nd St. 595-7400. . . . **GUYS AND DOLLS:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **JELLY'S LAST JAM:** Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-7400. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **NUNSENSE:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **THE WILL ROGERS FOLLIES:** Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 730-8200.6200.

BRIAN GRIMWOOD

DANCE

Dancing on Their Graves

At the end of Ingmar Bergman's movie "*The Seventh Seal*," the major characters—felled by plague and mayhem—join hands on a hillside and perform one of the most famous dances in the history of literature and art: the Totentanz, or dance of death. They don't truly dance, though; instead, they twist and stumble without pattern or rhythm. Their "dance" is a metaphor.

A little show of prints at Galerie St. Etienne (through March 13) reveals that, at least on paper, Death once actually danced his victims out of the world. And the dance was a jig. This exhibit, titled "The Dance of Death: Images of Mortality in German Art," focusses on the Totentanz during three historical periods—the sixteenth century, the years following the revolutions of 1848, and the twentieth century prior to the Second World War. Only in the first was Death persuasively portrayed as a dancer as well as a musician. In prints by Wolgemuth and Holbein the Younger, for example, the character is represented as a grinning skeleton, well proportioned and with that firm stance which bespeaks what dancers call "a strong center." He cuts a spare, stylized figure of childish glee; he really knows how to kick up his heels. Later artists saw Death as someone less lively: a windy demagogue, a stodgy tyrant, a hopeless infantryman, an old stick-in-the-mud.

New York City Ballet—Feb. 10 at 8: "Square Dance," "Bet Ann's Dance," and "Delight of the Muses." . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." . . ¶ Feb. 12 at 8: "Square Dance," "Afternoon of a Faun," "Antique Epigraphs," and "Prodigal Son." . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 2: "The Four Temperaments," "Romeo and Juliet," "Bet Ann's Dance," and "Glass Pieces." . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 8: "Square Dance," "In the Night," and "Chaconne." . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 1: "The Steadfast Tin Soldier," "Andantino," "Bet Ann's Dance," and "Chaconne." . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 7 and Feb. 16 at 8: "A Midsummer Night's Dream." (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Through Feb. 21.)

Elisa Monte Dance Company—In "Dreamtime," "Absolute Rule," "Last Temptation," "Broken Journey," and "Skylarking." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 10-13 at 8, and Feb. 14 at 2 and 7:30.)

Vivian Trimble—In "The Word House," with six dancers. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Feb. 11-13 at 8, and Feb. 14 at 3.)

Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks—In "Jo Ha Kyu." Presented by Danspace Project. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Feb. 12-14 at 8:30. For reservations, call 674-8194.)

Jennifer Muller/The Works—The opening performance of a one-week engagement consists of ". . . And Now" (première), "Glass Houses," and "Thesaurus" (New York première). (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Feb. 16 at 7:30. Through Feb. 21.)

NIGHT LIFE

Take Five

"THERE'S a whole bunch of people out there hoping that we fail," Neil Ender says. This week, Ender opens the Five Spot, a two-hundred-and-forty-seat jazz club located at 4 West 31st Street. That neighborhood is something of a no man's land, and the club won't exactly be convenient for the tourists who stalk the streets of Greenwich Village in search of jazz-related thrills. Still, the Five Spot should make for a memorable night out. It's set in a gigantic, airy, gilt-and-marble ballroom, and it will be bringing in some impressive musicians, including the saxophonist David Sanborn, who will perform on February 9-10.

Ender says his goal is to "take jazz out of the basement and put it into the penthouse." Although that may sound suspiciously like a challenge to subterranean jazz haunts like Fat Tuesday's and the Village Vanguard, there's no doubt that what Ender really wants is to take a bite out of the Blue Note. In the coming months, the Five Spot will feature many musicians associated with that particular jazz room—Ray Charles among them. The Blue Note's official response is that competition is healthy, and that they have nothing to prove and nothing to fear. Meanwhile, the Five Spot is laying out serious money for big-leaguers like Sanborn and Charles.

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type is used to pick out some of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Call the phone number listed for performance schedules and, since musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change, to confirm engagements.)

ALGONQUIN HOTEL, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—**DAVID STALLER** is currently at work in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Staller's early show is a Rodgers and Hart revival titled "Easy to Remember"; his late show on Fridays and Saturdays is "Noël & Cole." Dining.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek, green-walled room with brass railings and mounted O'Keeffian animal skulls. Look closer and you'll find that the skulls are wearing earrings. After the show, be sure to check out the adjoining restaurant/tapas bar, which looks like the indoor food market of your dreams. The Brazilian-born samba singer **BETH CARVALHO** is in residence through Feb. 14. **LISA ONO,** who serves up jazz and bossa nova, is at work as of Feb. 16.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Once you get past the rough bits here—the hordes of tourists, the cattle-car seating, the stiff prices—you're likely to find yourself face to face with some of the biggest names in jazz. An acoustic trio, with **STANLEY CLARKE, MIKE GARSON,** and **JIMMY PAXSON,** is on the premises until Feb. 14; **TRIO DA PAZ** comes in on Feb. 15; and **LARRY CARLTON** begins a week-long engagement on Feb. 16.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Burgers, fries, and other things to make your heart beat faster. **DARLENE LOVE** will be here for three successive Wednesdays, beginning on Feb. 10. Love's set will be divided into two acts. The first will include narrated segments meant to bring youngsters up to speed on the singer's life

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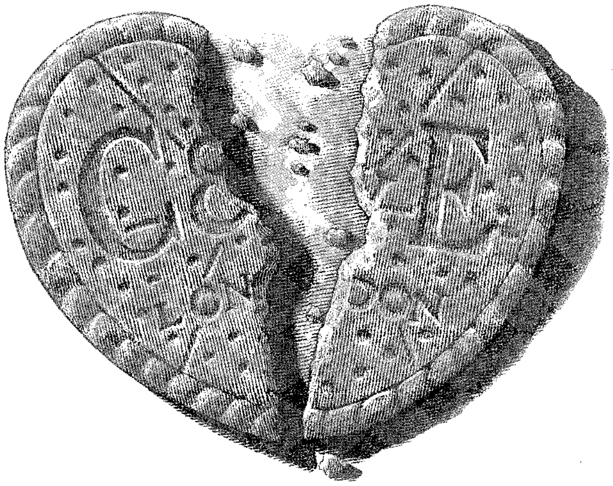

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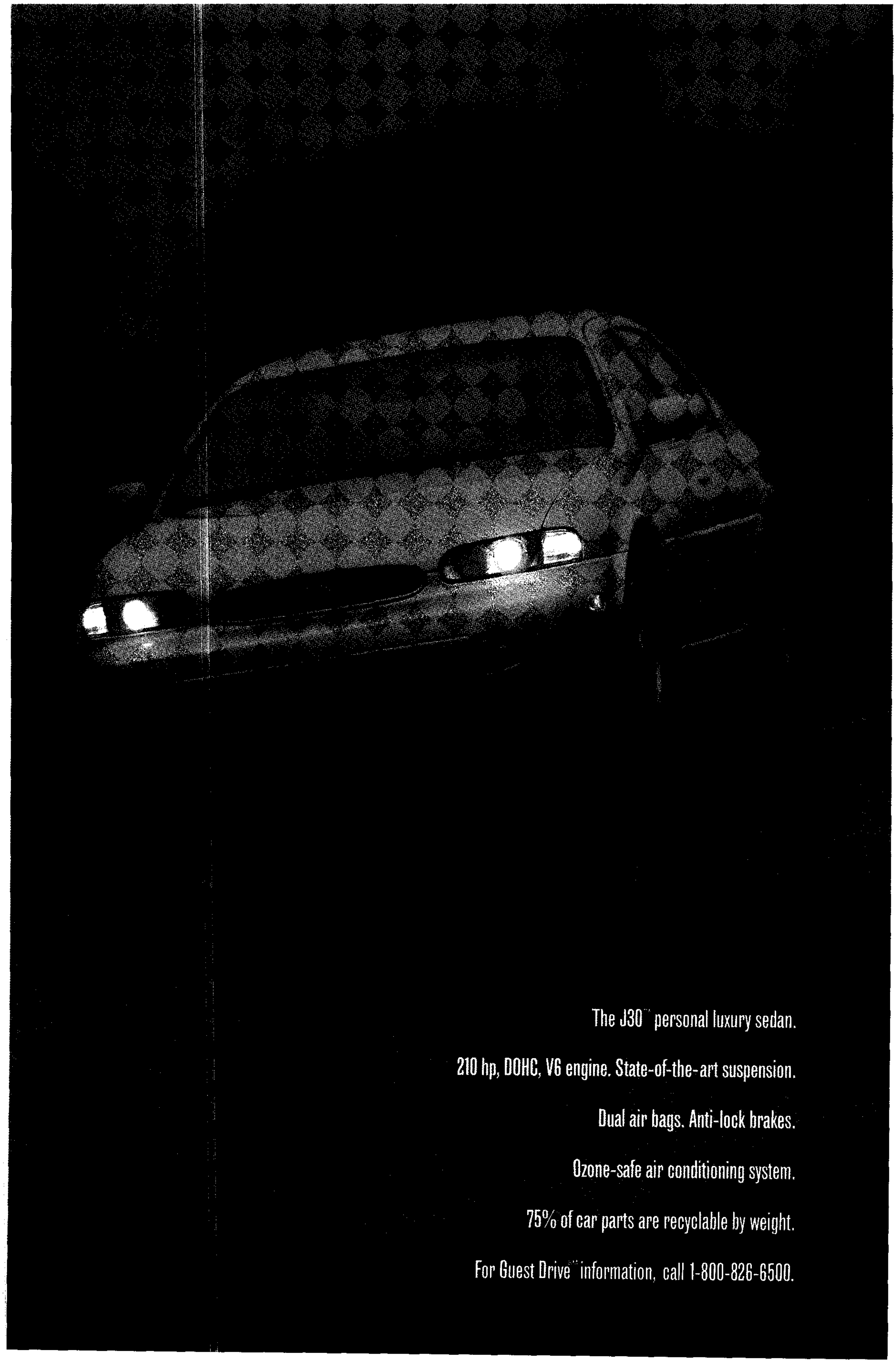

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story, and it will also include highlights from the singer's long history of hits. Love could be heard on "He's a Rebel," "(Today I Met) The Boy I'm Gonna Marry," and, most recently, "All Alone on Christmas" from "Home Alone 2." The second act will be dedicated to new material. **THE ROCHES** come in on Feb. 12, and **FOUR BITCHIN' BABES** appear Feb. 13-14. The Babes, who consist of folksinger-songwriters Christine Lavin, Sally Fingerett, Julie Gold, and Megon McDonough, have recently released their second album. Somehow, the group is better in theory than it is in practice. Lavin is always good for a wry observation or two—her contributions here include "Bald Headed Men" and the "Jeopardy" theme song, for which she has written a funny little lyric. But Gold's songs—such as her mind-boggling tune "From a Distance"—are over-earnest and tend to drift off into New Age la-la land. The Irish singer-songwriter **LUKA BLOOM**, whose first-rate live shows are the folk world's worst-kept secret, comes in on Feb. 15.

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Within the narrow walls of this venerable piano-and-bass preserve, everything is easy on the eyes and ears. The **GARY BARTZ** trio, which features pianist **JOHN HICKS,** will be at work through Feb. 13; the **STEVE NELSON** trio comes in on Feb. 14; and pianist **KIRK LIGHTSEY** leads a trio of his own as of Feb. 15. Dining.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **EARTHA KITT.** Kitt has a staggering list of stage, TV, and recording credits. Most of her songs are tales of men and money, and she doesn't so much sing her lyrics as growl them, prowling the stage like a lioness protecting her cubs. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano. Kurt Wieting is in on Mondays.

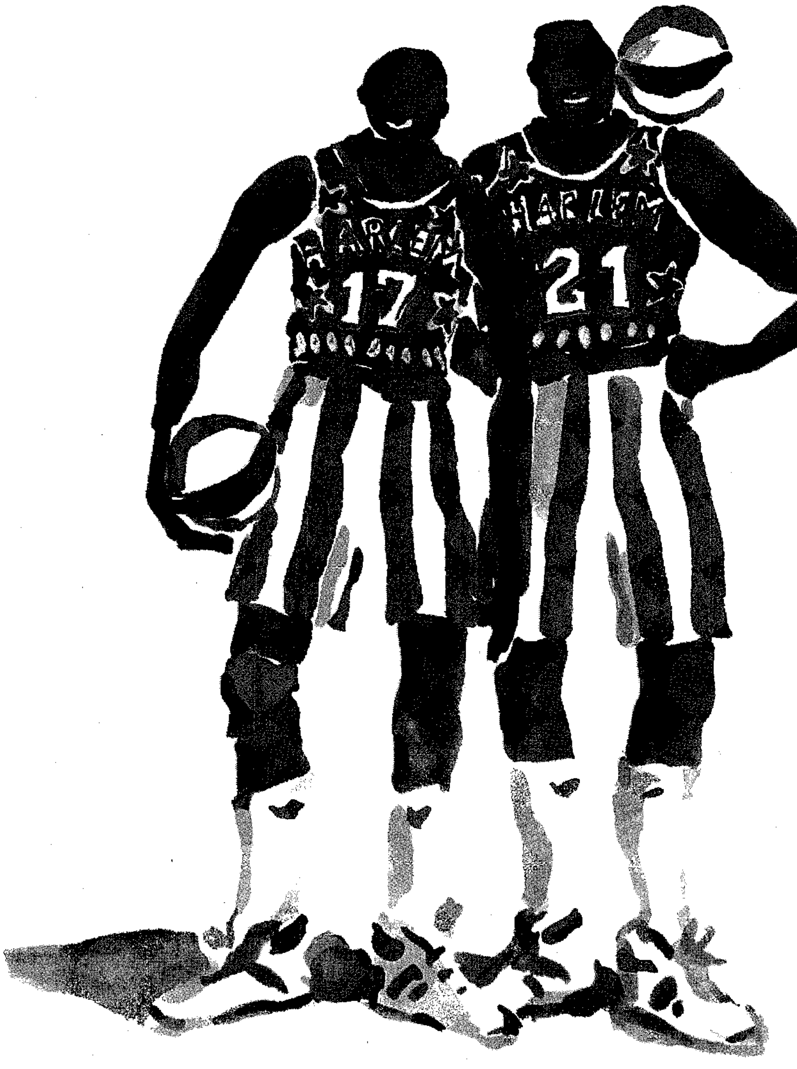
CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The city's most famed rock club—new and used bands of every stripe pass through nightly. This week's offerings include **MARK CURRY** (Feb. 11), **MICHELLE MALONE** (Feb. 13), and **PBR STREET GANG** (Feb. 14).

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Fat Tuesday's underwent some cosmetic surgery recently, but jazz is still the club's most prominent feature. The **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** quartet is here through Feb. 14. **JIMMY WITHERSPOON**—a singer who puts his own imprint on standards, injecting them with personal reminiscence and biting humor—performs with a trio as of Feb. 16. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—The latest entry in the jazz-club sweepstakes. Saxophonist **DAVID SANBORN** opens the place Feb. 9-10; **JOE SAMPLE** appears Feb. 11-14; **JOHN PIZZARELLI** performs on Feb. 15; and the newly reunited **BRECKER BROTHERS** begin a week-long engagement on Feb. 16. The group, which is headed up by saxophonist Michael Brecker and trumpeter Randy Brecker, recently released "Return of the Brecker Brothers," a bit of genre-hopping genius that has found its way into the contemporary jazz Top Ten. At the moment, the band is in the midst of its first tour in ten years. "The idea was to take a short break," Randy Brecker said recently. "But I guess we've been busy." Dining.

Lone Star Roadhouse, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—A two-tiered honky-tonk that looks as if it could have been the inspiration for the Hard Rock Café. (It wasn't, of course; money was.) The Bob and Ray of rockabilly, **ROBERT GORDON** and **CHRIS SPEDDING,** are in action Feb. 12. Gordon, who looks every inch the fifties rocker, from his pompadour to his pointy shoes, has a resonant baritone that's just right for songs like "Black Slacks" and Elvis's "Love Me." But Spedding's guitar playing transcends the genre, making the duo's act much more than just a fifties retread. **URBAN BLIGHT** comes in on Feb. 13, and **NRBQ** is here on Feb. 14. Dining.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A cabaret in the clouds. **ROSEMARY CLOONEY** has just begun a monthlong engagement. The singer has, in effect, had two lives in show biz: the first peaked in the early fifties, with a string of hit recordings and a starring role in "White Christmas"; the second began in the late seventies, when she signed with the Concord label. She has made more than a dozen albums with Concord, half of which are tribute albums. Onstage, Ms. Clooney's approach is natural and understated: she has a warm, husky but clear voice, a world-weary cheerfulness, and a disarming sense of humor that bubbles up everywhere. Her very able accompanists include saxophonist **SCOTT HAMILTON,** cornettist **WARREN VACHÉ,** and guitarist **BUCKY PIZZARELLI.** Dining.


The Harlem Globetrotters at Madison Square Garden (see page 15).

GERARD NICOLAS

Ritz, 254 W. 54th St. (541-8900)—This space was once a theatre, as the cherubim friezes and Louis the Something ceiling attest. Then it was Studio 54, and, if you try real hard, you can still hear the grunts, moans, and snorts of seventies disco ghosts. Now it's a massive rock club, where **HUGH MASEKELA** and **ASTER AWEKE** are sharing a bill on Feb. 13.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—On Valentine's Day, **JULIE WILSON** will weave her spell in the upstairs cabaret of this landmark. Ms. Wilson serves as a constant in a changing world: her elbow-length black gloves, her outrageous feather boa, and the gardenia behind her ear seem immutable; and her rather gravelly voice seems custom-made for an unflinching delivery of golden-age popular-song classics, whether romantic or risqué. Plus, she's an authentic Lady from Omaha: where would one be without them? The estimable **WILLIAM ROY** will collaborate at the keyboard. On the following evening (Feb. 15), **CRAIG CARNELIA** will perform in the second of three Mondays in which he presents his own songs. Though not yet a household name, Carnelia has been racking up honors from those who know the cabaret scene, and his songs are showing up steadily in the repertoire of leading club singers, including Julie Wilson. Dining.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—The closest thing in Manhattan to a rain forest. There's a Brazil-fest in sway as of Feb. 12, with **SAMBA NOVO** performing Feb. 12-13 and **BRAZILIAN ENERGY** taking the stage on Feb. 14. **GIL SCOTT-HERON** begins a two-day run on Feb. 16.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A pretty serious jazz shrine. The **NICK BRIGNOLA** quartet is here through Feb. 14, and the **JANE BUNNETT** quintet starts up on Feb. 16. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Time Café, 380 Lafayette St., at Great Jones St. (533-7000)—Hidden within this sleek and trendy restaurant is a two-story club called Fez. Upstairs is a sumptuous Moroccan bar and lounge appointed with satin couches, mosaic tables, and Arabic-style fixtures. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is rather plain in comparison, but still a comfortable spot to take in a show. The **MINGUS**

BIG BAND packs them in every Thursday. The fourteen-piece ensemble, directed by saxophonists **ALEX FOSTER** and **CRAIG HANDY**, concentrates exclusively on the tricky, cacophonous work of its catalyst, Charles Mingus.

Tramps, 45 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—Zydeco, soul, blues, and rock are the main orders of business here. **JIMMY DAWKINS** appears Feb. 12-13. Dining.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—This slice-of-pie-shaped basement has an illustrious history that embraces everyone from Judy Holliday to Lenny Bruce, from Pete Seeger and Leadbelly to Miles Davis and Sonny Rollins. **TOMMY FLANAGAN** leads a trio through Feb. 14, and the **MULGREW MILLER** trio is at work as of Feb. 16. Mondays are reserved for the **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA.**

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Home to an endless Summer of Love. Wetlands is a groovy, psychedelic, thoroughly Green night club. This week: **RICK DANKO** and **SOLAR CIRCUS** (Feb. 13), **CHOOSY MOTHERS** (Feb. 15), and **FRANKLIN TURNPIKE** (Feb. 16).

EDGE OF NIGHT LIFE

Now that El Morocco goes topless and the Copacabana readily admits a clientele they used to only let in the side door to make deliveries, you would think even the dimmest entrepreneur would give up the flickering image of big bands and Bakelite floors, white ties and page boys dancing chic to chic. But no. The year's *folie d'estime*, the Supper Club (240 West 47th Street), has now been transformed, on Friday nights, into—what else?—a dance party whose host is a drag queen. Four things, happily, keep Poop, as the night is known, from being the butt of bad puns: a truly mixed can't-be-bothered crowd; a space far better suited to this new incarnation; lighting so dim you can hardly see the worse-than-Hillary's-inauguration-outfits red-white-and-blue color scheme; and live entertainment that often wears a dress—and without having to pad it out. There's only one problem: "That singer has a wonderful voice, but she has no flair, no elegance, no sense of style," a famous designer in the crowd bitched. "Now, look at *her*," he said, pointing at the evening's hostess, the Lady Bunny, standing next to the chanteuse. "Some drag queens have so much class. They should teach the rest of us." So *that's* what went wrong with El Morocco!

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Walt Disney's World on Ice—Mickey, Minnie, Goofy, et al., on skates. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. Feb. 12-21. For information on show times and tickets, call 247-4777.)

Penny Arcade—In her show "Bitch! Dyke! Faghag! Whore!" (Top of the Gate, 160 Bleecker St. 475-5120. Fridays and Saturdays at 8.)

Harlem Globetrotters—Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 13 at 1. . . . ¶ Nassau Coliseum. 1-516 794-9300. Feb. 14 at 2. . . . ¶ Meadowlands Arena. 1-201 935-3900. Feb. 15 at 1.

P.S. 122—Feb. 11-14 at 7:30: Peggy Pettitt presents "Tricksters: All Over You Like White on Rice." Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ Feb. 11-14 at 9: "No Trace of the Blonde," a work by Holly Hughes, with sets by Janie Geiser and music by Tiyé Giraud. Through Feb. 21. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

California Dreamin'

Ed Ruscha's so-called "Liquid" paintings (at Gagosian, 980 Madison Avenue, at 76th Street; through February 27) were made between 1966 and 1969. Broadly speaking, each consists of an ombré background, in an unwholesome color, and a single floating word. But think of ripe papayas and Coppertone tans, of Tequila Sunrises in Santa Monica bars, of killer tropical punches tinted blue. And the words—"Oily," "Ruby," "City," "Lisp," "Adios"—look like idle drawings made on countertops with a straw and the remains of a drink. Here and there, at closer range, tiny still-life motifs—refried beans, an olive, pomegranate seeds, a couple of marbles, foam—may be found clinging to a bubble or swirled into a spill, and a vision of, say, the Dutch Masters on a beach near Tijuana comes to mind. These paintings are beautiful. Like the waking ends of dreams, their piebald surfaces seem to dissolve into one-word utterances. At that instant, you may suddenly feel a puff of air pushing you off again to look for some perspective on a memory. Ruscha is one cool bard, however, and offers no easy advice or assistance. A blue nocturne called "U" must be a valentine of sorts, for instance, but the letter "u" takes the form of a distracted gesture, against a tiled shower wall, traced in suds resembling a baby's spittle.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Fashion and History: A Dialogue" is the first installation in the redesigned Costume Institute. . . . ¶ "Drawing for Design" includes sketches and finished pieces by designers, architects, and artists from Christopher Dresser to Robert Venturi. . . . ¶ "The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre." Two hundred works in copper, bronze, stone, and clay. Through March 7. . . . ¶ The third-century works in "Loma Negra, A Peruvian Lord's Tomb" range from small gilt nose and ear ornaments to large headdresses and masks. . . . ¶ Twenty-five examples of elaborately inscribed and decorated medieval Islamic garments. Through March 14. . . . ¶ An installation of works from the museum's large collection of Italian majolica and Venetian glass. . . . ¶ The Robert Wood Johnson, Jr., Gallery has been renovated, and for the first time will be a vehicle for the permanent display of drawings, prints, and photographs. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—Since many of the museum's major works have been on reciprocal loan to other museums in exchange for Matisses, the museum has chosen to reinstall a number of its remaining paintings, sculptures, and other objects in a nonchronological fashion. There are several informative passages, such as Picasso's sexually charged "Demoiselles" and de Kooning's fierce "Woman I" displayed next to Louise Bourgeois' defiant, ironically erect "Sleeping Figure." Through Feb. 21. . . . ¶ "The Artist and the Book in Twentieth-Century Italy." Through Feb. 16.

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GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"AMERICA Invention," a new work by Lothar Baumgarten. The walls of the large rotunda, from the skylight to the ground and back up again, are inscribed with the Westernized names for Native American societies from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego. Through March 7. (Open daily, except Thursdays, 10 to 8.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Photography in Contemporary German Art: 1960 to the Present" explores various unconventional approaches to the medium, including the use of handworked materials and outsized formats. Bernd and Hilla Becher, Joseph Beuys, Sigmar Polke, and Katharina Sieverding are among the artists represented. Starts Feb. 10. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings until 10.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"The Geometric Tradition in American Art, 1930-90" includes work by Ellsworth Kelly, Ad Reinhardt, Donald Judd, and Burgoyne Diller. Through Feb. 14. . . . ¶ A retrospective of paintings by Jean-Michel Basquiat. Through Feb. 14. . . . ¶ "Photography: Expanding a Collection" includes works by Cindy Sherman, Robert Mapplethorpe, Sally Mann, and Larry Clark. Through Feb. 14. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Ida Applebroog's new installation, titled "Everything Is Fine," consists of several paintings and works on paper hung in the lobby, along with twenty-five freestanding paintings. Through April 25. . . . ¶ Sixty sculptures by Auguste Rodin are in the Cantor Gallery. Among the works are two independent pieces from "The Gates of Hell"; maquettes, studies, and four full-scale figures from "The Burghers of Calais"; and several versions of "Balzac.". . . ¶ "Dame of the Narrows" (1976), a sculpture of the Staten Island ferry arriving at the Manhattan terminal, by Red Grooms, Mimi Gross, and the Ruckus Construction Company, is on view. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

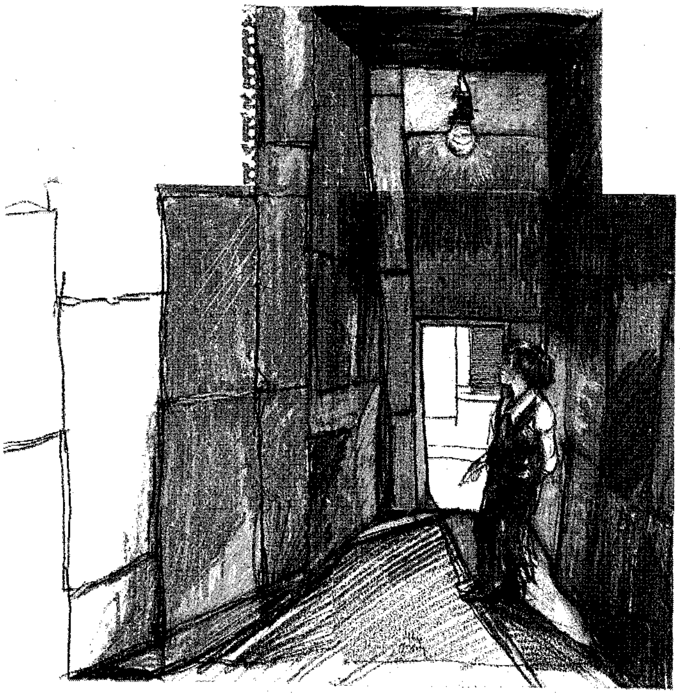
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—The museum is displaying the skeleton of Jumbo, the world-famous elephant who reigned as "The Towering Monarch of His Mighty Race" in the Barnum & Bailey Circus. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—"One Thousand Days One Million Years," an exhibition of paintings from the "Today Series," by On Kawara. Also on view are "One Million Years (Past)," which comprises ten typewritten volumes, and "One Million Years (Future)," a sound piece. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—Maps have always provided a readily accessible visual means of escape, and it is perhaps no coincidence that, at a time when the borders within whole continents are being redrawn, maps have been cropping up in exhibitions all over town. Maps are the main subject here, and there are some wonderful objects on view, including a Mesopotamian clay tablet; a navigation chart, from the Marshall Islands, made of sticks and shells; and a *lukasa*, a map made of wood, beads, and metal, which was used by a secret society of the Luba people of Zaire. Closer to our notion of a map is one of the Roman Empire, which gives an unusually tangible sense of a world in which the number of roads from Britain to Ceylon totalled one. There are maps that track the transmission of plagues and maps that chart the ozone hole over Antarctica. There is even a display showing the inside of a map-lover's glove compartment. But so much effort has gone into proving that maps can be fun that much of the fun has been stripped away. The labels are admirably terse, but more could have been left to the imagination by creatively juxtaposing the material and letting museumgoers figure it all out themselves. Through March 7 . . . . ¶ A show of drawings, prints, textiles, and wall coverings by designers and architects who have died of AIDS. Through Feb. 28. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—An exhibition of furniture from the French Renaissance, along with Old Master prints and drawings. (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

MORGAN LIBRARY, 29 E. 36th St.—In "Thomas Jefferson: Tranquil Pursuits and Stormy Politics," one can see "Summary View of the Rights of America" (1774), his first published work; the library's copy of the first printing of the Declaration of Independence; personal letters to Elbridge Gerry (later v.p. under Madison); and letters to his daughter Martha. Through April 18. . . . ¶ Another Presidential rarity—the recently acquired "house divided" manuscript, the earliest known expression of Abraham Lincoln's doctrine opposing slavery. Through Feb. 28. . . . ¶ A large show of medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts from the Breslauer Collection is on view. Through April 4. . . . ¶ "Printers and Miniaturists" shows off the finest in late-fifteenth-century Venetian illuminated books. Through April 4. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)



A Wolfgang Laib installation at Sperone Westwater.

LYNN PAULEY

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART, Flushing Meadow Park—Ten works by Keith Haring—eight drawings, one sculpture, and a sixty-foot mural in the main-floor gallery. The installation is part of an extensive educational program for schoolchildren and families. Through Aug. 31. . . . ¶ Images of, and references to, money in art over the past thirty years, in "The Realm of the Coin: Money in American Art, 1960–90," featuring the work of Laurie Anderson, Mary Kelley, Andy Warhol, and David Wojnarowicz. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5, Saturdays and Sundays, noon to 5.)

STUDIO MUSEUM IN HARLEM, 144 W. 125th St.—"Wifredo Lam and His Contemporaries, 1938-52." More than a hundred paintings by a Cuban modernist of African, Chinese, and Spanish ancestry. Lam was an early multi-culti, the first artist to turn the sometimes condescending primitivism of modern art on its ear. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

SHORT LIST—HANNELORE BARON, Schlesinger, 24 E. 73rd St. (through Feb. 27); **JULIAN SCHNABEL,** Marks, 1018 Madison Ave., at 79th St. (through March 6); **JAIME SUAREZ,** CDS Gallery, 76 E. 79th St. (through Feb. 27); **ESTEBAN VICENTE,** Berry-Hill, 11 E. 70th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 13); **JOHN WALKER,** Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St. (through Feb. 13).

GALLERIES—57TH STREET AREA

ANDREW WYETH—Paintings and watercolors from the thirties to the present. In looking at this show, it is very difficult to fathom what the Wyeth mystique is all about. The works' realism is not masterly, their moods are not determinate, their psychic depictions are not probing, their arrangements of forms are less felicitous than an ordinary still-life's—even their vaunted sentimentality is about as satisfying as a store-bought apple pie. Through Feb 27. (ACA, 41 E. 57th St.)

"SIGNIFICANT OTHERS: ARTIST WIVES OF ARTISTS"—Some of the wives in this exhibit—Mrs. Robert Henry (Marjorie Organ), Mrs. John Sloan (Helen Farr), and Mrs. Ilya Bolotowsky (Esphyr Slobodkina)—tended to work in styles derivative of their husbands', rarely living up to their own potential, some not even taking their own talent seriously. Other significant others in this generally spirited show are represented by strong, engaging works that leave one longing for more, especially the disturbing self-portrait by Hellen Torr (Mrs. Arthur Dove), which is piercingly rendered yet reveals nothing; a sexy painting of leaves by Elsie Drigg (Mrs. Lee Gatch), which follows in the tradition of Georgia O'Keeffe's organic abstraction while being unmistakably her own; and a playful ink drawing by Dorothy Dehner (Mrs. David Smith). Perhaps the fact that each of these women worked in the shadow of her husband and was not encouraged to upset the equation was expressed best by a friend of Marjorie Organ's, who said, "The extra grain of ego she needed might have spoiled her understanding disposition." Then again, Marguerite Zorach's 1924 embroidery, of a female nude before a window, is something else entirely; its sass and sexual subversiveness would do any feminist proud. Through Feb. 13. (Kraushaar, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

SHORT LIST—NICOL ALLAN, Davis & Langdale, 231 E. 60th St. (through Feb. 15); **MILTON AVERY,** Borgenicht, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 13); **JOHN CARLSON,** Babcock 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through March 3); **VINCENT DESIDERIO,** Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. (open Mondays, through Feb. 27); **ARTHUR G. DOVE,** Dintenfass, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 13); **MARTHA MAYER ERLEBACHER** and **MARK WORKMAN,** Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 27); **MINNIE EVANS,** Ross, 50 W. 57th St.

(through March 6); **PHILIP GEIGER,** Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 20); **ROBERT GOODNOUGH,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. (through March 2); **HANS HOFMANN,** Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 13); **ALEX KATZ,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 27); **JAMES MCGARRELL,** Frumkin-Adams, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. (through Feb. 27); **HARVEY QUAYTMAN,** McKee, 50 W. 57th St. (through March 3); **BONELL SILVERMAN,** Ulysses, 41 E. 57th St. (through Feb. 27); **TOM UTTECH,** Schmidt Bingham, 41 W. 57th St. (through Feb. 27).

GALLERIES—SoHo

RICHARD ARTSCHWAGER—A disappointing show with a lot of production but not enough juice. While all the paintings and sculptures here are recent, they form a sort of Artschwagerian greatest hits, an attempt to revisit some of his past glories. There is a dictionary-like pulpit, a painting of an interior, a surrealistic, wavy dinner table (on the wall), and several corner pieces. Through Feb. 27. (Boone, 417 West Broadway.)

TARO CHIEZO—This young Japanese artist, who has recently emerged on the international circuit, is showing a small platoon of free-standing baptismal gowns that look as if they were purchased on 14th Street. They are rigged with toy-car motors, and they spin around the gallery bumping into walls and colliding with each other, back up, and then set off on new paths. The show has a carefree spirit, but the ideas are not terribly original. Through Feb. 13. (Gering, 476 Broome St.)

WOLFGANG LAIB—This Zen-ish artist's work tends to be both Spartan and fragile. Here he has built a fascinating work—an irregularly shaped room whose walls are covered with large panels of dense, rich beeswax. The aroma is so overwhelming that it causes the lungs to constrict. While the artist has made an embracing shelter, the walls tilt a little too much, the ceiling is a bit too high for the chamber's width, and soon you begin to feel trapped in a space so consumed by the residue of life and work that it leaves no room for either. Through Feb. 27. (Sperone Westwater, 121 Greene St.)

PAUL MCCARTHY—The main piece in this exhibition of recent work by one of the showstoppers of L.A. MOCA's "Helter Skelter" can perhaps be appreciated only by connoisseurs of the Los Angeles school of scatological art; i.e., people whose social development ground permanently to a halt in junior high school. It consists of an elaborate, decrepit stage set covered with what looks for all the world like the residue of a prodigious food fight. Beside it is a videotape of the actual genesis of the mess, enacted by the artist, wearing an Alfred E. Neuman mask. In a nearby room is an amusing piece consisting of a three-dimensional tableau of a father, a son, and a goat, modelled somewhat after Grant Wood's "American Gothic" but with a twist or two that put it right up the alley of another famous Alfred—Kinsey. Through Feb. 13. (Luhring Augustine, 130 Prince St.)

OLIVER WASOW/FRED TOMASELLI—Long, horizontal paintings with all sorts of nuclear and cyberpunk imagery—lots of planets, primordial landscapes, and rock singers in flames. They are slick and seamless, and they look rather like strips of film—a medium to which they owe too great a debt. / "Cubic Skies" comprises six cube structures illuminated from within and suspended from the ceiling of a darkened room. They're captivating for the moment it takes to apprehend them but are not as interesting as this artist's usual works—"paintings" made out of cannabis leaves and pills. Through Feb. 13. (Baer, 476 Broome St.)

BETTY WOODMAN—The painting on Woodman's ceramics becomes more lush with every show, as if she were taking us deeper and deeper into the tropics. Her new freestanding pots are large and fanciful. Attached to the backs of the pots are flowing "balustrades" that envelop them like capes. They are shaped roughly like male figures, and seem intended as good-natured retorts to the classical notion of vessels as female forms. Through Feb. 13. (Protetch, 560 Broadway.)

"I AM THE ENUNCIATOR"—A frantic gathering, masquerading as a curatorial extravaganza, of works by a cast of dozens of hip artists. The works are grouped cheek by jowl according to their lowest common denominators—"vertical abstract paintings of elementary marks," for example, or "pictures of deformed children"; the dumbness seems deliberate. Scattered throughout are video monitors replaying tapes of films either featuring, or made by, aestheticized psychos: De Palma's "Body Double," Godard's "Passion," and, of course, Hitchcock's "Psycho." There must be some point to this lame attempt at cross-pollination, but it's anybody's guess what it is. Most of the important artists are represented by insignificant works, while some of the hungriest have clearly worked extra hard. One of the smartest works is a sculpture, by Meyer Vaisman, of a huge turkey perched on a divan of thick black hair. One of the few informative works is a drawing by the architect Zaha Hadid of her original scheme for the Guggenheim's Soviet-avant-garde exhibition. Through Feb. 27. (Thread Waxing Space, 476 Broadway.)

"SELECTIONS/WINTER '93"—There are some notable works in The Drawing Center's current show, including Kenneth Goldsmith's word drawings, with their poetic patter in overlapping stanzas, and Janine Gordon's pleasant "Hypnotic Tattoos," which could make any body more tantalizing. The most compelling works, by the late Charles Crumb, are several notebooks filled with page after page after page of psychotic hen-scratchings; while not drawings per se, they have about them an urgency so often lacking in the work of "professional" artists. Through Feb. 20. (35 Wooster St. Open Wednesday evenings until 8.)

GROUP SHOW—A spirited selection of sculptures and multiples by contemporary artists. Some of the artists are fairly well known—many have been associated with this gallery for years—but there are a few unfamiliar names. One of the livelier discoveries is Doris Salcedo, a Colombian, who has placed old shoes in cubbyholes built directly into the gallery wall and covered them with a casing of sutured cow bladder. The funniest piece, by Mike Kelley, is a wooden paddle printed with the Preamble to the Constitution. Appropriately enough, it was produced as a low-priced fund-raiser for Artists Space, the organization that got its rump smacked several years ago when the National Endowment for the Arts cancelled a grant because of an outspoken essay by the late David Wojnarowicz that was included in a catalogue for an exhibition about AIDS. Through Feb. 13. (Brooke Alexander, 59 Wooster St. and Brooke Alexander Editions, 476 Broome St.)

SHORT LIST—**ROBERT CUMMING,** Marcus, 578 Broadway (through March 6); **CARROLL DUNHAM,** Sonnabend, 420 West Broadway (through Feb. 27); **JERRY KEARNS,** Freire, 130 Prince St. (through Feb. 20), and Kent, 47 E. 63rd St. (open Mondays, closed Saturdays, through March 5); **ED KERR,** O.K. Harris, 383 West Broadway (through Feb. 27); **JAMES HYDE,** Good, 532 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **DAVID LASRY,** Auchincloss, 558 Broadway (through March 10); **CAROL PYLANT,** Cacciola, 125 Wooster St. (through March 2); **SELINA TRIEFF,** Perlow, 560 Broadway (through Feb. 27); **PANAMARENKO,** Feldman, 31 Mercer St. (through Feb. 13); **HEDDA STERNE,** Briet, 558 Broadway (through Feb. 27).

OTHER GALLERIES

GROUP SHOW—Humorous drawings by eleven contributors to these pages. Participants include Barsotti, Chast, Crawford, Kaplan, Mankoff, Maslin, O'Brien, Roberts, Shanahan, Stevens, and Ziegler. Through Feb. 28. (Illustration Gallery, 330 E. 11th St.)

SPLENDID SECLUSION

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Everyday People

THE name Andres Serrano gained widespread public attention in 1987, when Senator Jesse Helms went on his binge against freedom of expression. But the photographer deserves respect, not misunderstanding, especially in light of the current show—his best work yet—at the Paula Cooper gallery (155 Wooster Street; through February 20). In a group of large Cibachrome pictures, titled "The Morgue," Serrano has transcended the voyeurism that is implicit in this kind of photography and given us dignified pictures that have a look so carefully worked out that one is drawn to his images, not repulsed. There is a humanity and grandeur to these pictures which one expects to see in the paintings of El Greco, say, or Francis Bacon, but not in the work of a contemporary photographer, particularly not in images that depict everyday tragedy. In Serrano's hands, people who have died as the result of a knifing, or AIDS, or suicide are treated as subjects who deserve unforgettable representation. He accomplishes this by zooming in on some aspect of their condition—for instance, the blood and bruises surrounding the left eye of a man who was hacked to death—that is difficult to get out of one's mind. These photographs are invariably detail shots; for instance, if the individual's face is viewed at all, it is always partly obscured. It is exactly this fragmentation that makes Serrano's work so haunting and so moral—however exposed they are, he grants his subjects privacy.

Margaret Morton—Forty black-and-white photographs of the inhabitants of two homeless communities—Bushville, in Chinatown, and the Hill, a shantytown next to the Manhattan Bridge. Through Feb. 15. (Henry Street Settlement, 466 Grand St. Opens at noon.)

Short List—**JOSEF BREITENBACH,** Houk Friedman, 1094 Madison Ave., at 82nd St., and Hirschl & Adler Modern, 420 West Broadway (both through Feb. 27); **FLOR GARDUÑO,** Americas Society, 680 Park Ave., at 68th St. (open daily, except Mondays, noon to 6, through March 7); **EMIL HEILBORN,** Mann, 42 E. 76th St. (through April 10); **SAUL LEITER,** Greenberg, 120 Wooster St. (through Feb. 20); **DIANE MICHENER** and **MARK KLETT,** Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St. (through March 6); **MARTIN MUNKACSI,** Fashion Institute of Technology, 227 W. 27th St. (open Tuesday evenings until 9, through March 6); **MICHAEL A. SMITH,** Bace, 2 Bond St. (through Feb. 13); **ELLIOT SCHWARTZ,** Baum, 588 Broadway (through Feb.13); **MARK SINK,** Felissimo, 10 W. 56th St. (through March 3); **JOHN STEWART,** Staley-Wise, 560 Broadway (through March 13); **MAUD SULTER,** Steinbaum Krauss, 132 Greene St. (through Feb. 13); **LEONARD SUSSMAN,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway (through Feb. 27); **JOYCE TENNESON** and **PHYLLIS GALEMBO,** International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through March 28); **ROMAN VISHNIAC,** International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St. (open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8; through April 18); **RYAN WEIDMAN,** Opsis, 561 Broadway (through Feb 20).

MUSIC

My Evening with André

PROGRAMS with a crossover tint dominate this season's special events in the Great Performers at Lincoln Center series. But when André Previn and his trio (the bassist Ray Brown, the guitarist Mundell Lowe) come to play jazz at Avery Fisher Hall on February 14, the term should probably be "cross-back," since Mr. Previn came by his jazz expertise early and made his career with it before the classical world knew about him. He wasn't exactly born to it—he began his studies in his native Berlin—but any precocious musician settling at the age of ten in Los Angeles is bound to end up speaking American popular music almost as a mother tongue. (In his Hollywood days, he sometimes did crossover music of another sort: there is a very funny old broadcast of him playing the duet of Don Giovanni and Zerlina, more or less in jazz style, while Kathryn Grayson and Frank Sinatra try their best to sing it.)

Mr. Previn settled in New York State a few years back, and, ever since, he has become an increasingly regular presence on our local scene—he conducts the New York Philharmonic each season; he often appears with visiting groups, like the Curtis Institute orchestra earlier this month; he is the artistic adviser of the Caramoor Festival. Adding some jazz to the mix should prove a pleasant valentine to his new "home" public.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera House is 362-6000; for Avery Fisher Hall, 875-5030; for Carnegie Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; for the Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St., 570-3949; for the Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St., 854-7799; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 415-5440.)

OPERA

Metropolitan Opera—**DIE MEISTERSINGER,** in a new production, with Karita Mattila, Ben Heppner, Anthony Laciura, Donald McIntyre, Hermann Prey, and John Macurdy; conducted by James Levine. (Feb. 10 at 6.)... **DER ROSENKAVALIER,** with Mechthild Gessendorf, Susanne Mentzer, Heidi Grant Murphy, and Jan-Hendrik Rootering; Christian Thielemann. (Feb. 11 at 7:30.)... **CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA AND PAGLIACCI,** with Waltraud Meier, Bruno Beccaria, and Timothy Noble in the former, and Barbara Daniels, Ermanno Mauro, and Juan Pons in the latter; Nello Santi. (Feb. 12 and Feb. 15 at 8.)... **LES CONTES D'HOFFMANN,** with Carol Vaness (as all the heroines), Susanne Mentzer, Placido Domingo, and Alan Held; James Levine. (Feb. 13 at 1:30.)... **IL TROVATORE,** with Aprile Millo, Dolora Zajick, Nicola Martinucci, and Vladimir Chernov; Nello Santi. (Feb. 13 at 8.)... With Kristjan Johannsson as an Icelandic Manrico. (Feb. 16 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

Canadian Opera Company—From the frigid North, presenting (as its calling card to New York) a double bill of nightmarish one-acters: Bartók's "Bluebeard's Castle" and Schoenberg's monodrama "Erwartung." Richard Bradshaw will conduct and Robert Lepage will direct; featuring soprano Jane Gilbert and baritone Victor Braun in the Bartók, and soprano Rebecca Blankenship in the Schoenberg. The operas will be performed in their original Hungarian and German (respectively), with English supertitles. (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100. Feb. 10 at 7 and Feb. 12-13 at 8.)

ARTEK Ensemble—Gwendolyn Toth leads her period-instrument group in semi-staged highlights from Monteverdi's 1643 opera "L'Incoronazione di Poppea"; featuring soprano Dana Hanchard and mezzo-soprano Jennifer Lane, among others. The concert will also include Carlo Farina's exceedingly curious "Capriccio Stravagante" as a sort of prelude. (Church of St. Mary the Virgin, 145 W. 46th St. Feb. 11 and Feb. 14 at 8. For information about tickets, call 873-0473.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—Valery Gergiev conducts Tchaikovsky's "Serenade for Strings," Scriabin's "Poem of Ecstasy," and Brahms' Piano Concerto No. 2 (with André Watts). (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 11-13 at 8 and Feb. 16 at 7:30.)

Juilliard Orchestra—Stanislaw Skrowaczewski conducts Barber's "Medea's Meditation and

STEVE J. SHERMAN

David Owen Norris at the Miller Theatre.

Dance of Vengeance,'' Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 4 (with Min-Kyung Kwon), and Ravel's ''Daphnis et Chloë'' Suites No. 1 and No. 2. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Juilliard Symphony—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Copland's ''Fanfare for the Common Man,'' Bartók's Viola Concerto (featuring Susan Dubois), and Tchaikovsky's Symphony No. 4; also, Copland's ''A Lincoln Portrait,'' with the narration supplied by David Dinkins, better known for his nonmusical pursuits. (Alice Tully Hall. Feb. 12 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra—Glen Cortese conducts Mahler's Symphony No. 3 (with mezzo-soprano Beth Clayton). (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Feb. 12 at 8. No tickets necessary. . . . ¶ Trinity Church, Broadway at Wall St. Feb. 14 at 4. For information about tickets, call 602-0873.)

New York Chamber Symphony—An evening of four keyboard concertos by Bach (in E Major, D Major, D Minor, and F Minor), with Anthony Newman presiding from the harpsichord. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Vienna Philharmonic—In the first installment of the orchestra's three-evening engagement, Georg Solti conducts Bruckner's Symphony No. 8. (Carnegie Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

RECITALS

Guarneri Quartet—Performing Brahms' Quartet in B-Flat (Op. 67), Bartók's Quartet No. 3, and Fauré's C-Minor Piano Quartet (with the participation of Ruth Laredo). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Ysaÿe String Quartet—The French foursome performs Beethoven's ''Serioso'' Quartet (Op. 95), Dutilleux's ''Ainsi la Nuit,'' and Mendelssohn's A-Major Quartet (Op. 13). (Miller Theatre. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Carmit Zori—Violinist, performing sonatas by Bach, Brahms (his first, in G Major), and Copland, as well as Schubert's Sonatina No. 3; with pianist Charles Abramovic. (Weill Recital Hall, at Carnegie Hall. Feb. 10 at 8.)

Beverly Hoch—Soprano, with flutist Eugenia Zukerman and pianist Dennis Helmrich, performing a wide-ranging program of songs and arias associated with the historic Polish diva Marcella Sembrich, just a day before an exhibit of Sembrichiana closes, across the street, at the Amsterdam Gallery of the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Presented by the Marcella Sembrich Memorial Foundation. (Walter Reade Theatre, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. Feb. 10 at 8. For information about tickets, call 1-203 259-2994.)

Bargemusic—Chamber music for strings (or, in the case of the Sunday concert, heartstrings): a duo by Martinů, a trio by Dohnányi (his ''Serenade''), and a quartet by Brahms (in C Minor). (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Feb. 11 at 7:30 and Feb. 14 at 4, the latter being a Valentine's Day benefit, with dinner following.)

Grieg Trio—The Norwegian ensemble performs piano trios by Haydn (the ''Gypsy''), Lasse Thoresen (titled ''Bird of the Heart''), and Dvořák. (No Grieg, though—the more remarkable for this year's being the sesquicentennial of the composer's birth.) (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 11 at 8.)

TASHI—Clarinettist Richard Stoltzman, violinist Ida Kavafian, and cellist Fred Sherry (all founders of the chamber ensemble, which was established twenty years ago) are joined by newer members Theodore Arm (violin) and Steven Tenenbom (viola) in Brahms' Clarinet Quintet (preceded by a commentary). The program will also include movements from works with which the ensemble has been associated, by Wolf, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Carter, and Messiaen. (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 12 at 7.)

Menahem Pressler and the New York Chamber Soloists—The pianist and the chamber ensemble present an all-Mozart program: the Symphony No. 33 (K. 319), and two piano concertos (in G Major, K. 453, and in B-Flat, K. 595). (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Charles Neidich—Clarinettist, performing Schumann's ''Soiréestücke'' (the original version of what, refined, was published as his ''Fantasiestücke,'' Op. 73), Reger's Sonata in B-Flat (Op. 107), Babbitt's ''My Ends Are My Beginnings,'' Vassilii Lobonov's Sonata (in its New York première), and arrangements from Sarasate; with pianist Leonard Hokanson. (Miller Theatre. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Ensemble for Early Music—Frederick Renz conducts a mostly Monteverdi program, including selections from his ''Madrigali Guerrieri et Amorosi'' and ''Scherzi Musicali.'' (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Feb. 13 at 8. For information about tickets, call 749-6600.)

Guitar Trek—The New York début of an Australian quartet whose instruments include treble, baritone, and bass guitars in addition to the standard classical instrument. Think of it as a string quartet with a twist. That doesn't mean, however, that they simply pluck their way through standard string quartets by Haydn and Beethoven. Instead, they will range from Elizabethan consort pieces to arrangements from keyboard works (by Scarlatti, Brahms, and Milhaud), to recent compositions by Australian composers Richard Charlton, Nigel Westlake, Phillip Houghton, and Graeme Koehne (the last providing the evocatively titled piece ''To His Servant Bach, God Grants a Final Glimpse; The Morning Star''). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Volodymyr Vynnytsky—In his New York début recital, the pianist performs Beethoven's Sonata No. 18, Chopin's Polonaise in F-Sharp Minor, Brahms' Third Sonata, and the New York première of the Sonata Fantastique written in 1907 by Fedyr Yakymenko (a musical disciple of the French ''impressionists'' even before the Russian Revolution inspired him to immigrate to Paris, where he remained until his death, in 1947). (Ukrainian Institute of America, 2 E. 79th St. 288-8660. Feb. 13 at 8.)

Garrick Ohlsson—Pianist, performing an all-Chopin program. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. Feb. 14 at 2. For information about tickets, call 586-4680.)

The Music Project—The chamber ensemble plays Schoenberg's Kammersymphonie (Op. 9), Haydn's Piano Trio in A-Flat (with the assistance of the distinguished, mostly retired pianist Artur Balsam), and Brahms' B-Minor Clarinet Quintet. (Weill Recital Hall. Feb. 14 at 2.)

Jean-Pierre Rampal—The flutist plays sonatas by Mozart and Poulenc, Beethoven's Serenade (Op. 71), Schumann's ''Three Romances'' (Op. 94), and shorter works by Bartók and Jean-Michel Damase; with pianist John Steele Ritter. (Avery Fisher Hall. Feb. 14 at 3.)

Emerson String Quartet—Playing quartets by Dvořák (in G Major, Op. 106), Wolfgang Rihm (his Fourth, in its New York première), and Schubert (in G Major, D. 887). (92nd Street Y. Feb. 14 at 3.)

New York Philharmonic Ensembles—Members of the orchestra play a Spohr duo; Wolpe's Quartet for tenor saxophone, trumpet, percussion, and piano; and Schubert's Octet. (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 14 at 3.)

Gerald Ranck—The harpsichordist continues his traversal of Scarlatti's sonatas. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 874-5210. Feb. 14 at 3.)

Florence Gould Hall Chamber Players—A French strings-and-piano group plays chamber music by Poulenc, Chausson, Gérard Masson (a New York première), and Stravinsky. (Florence Gould Hall, 55 E. 59th St. 355-6160. Feb. 14 at 3.)

Turnpike Camerata—Presenting Richard Lee's ''The Sirens at the Horizon,'' John Sichel's ''Simone Sucks Her Thumb'' (a première), and Messiaen's ''Quartet for the End of Time.'' (Christ and St. Stephen's Church, 120 W. 69th St. Feb. 14 at 3. Tickets at the door on the day of the performance.)

Carillon—Bells are ringing for St. Valentine's Day. Joseph Clair Davis performs love songs, including a pair of arrangements of the Thuringian folk song ''How Do I Love Thee?'' (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Feb. 14 at 3. No tickets necessary.)

New York Festival of Song—Mezzo-soprano Lorraine Hunt, baritone Kurt Ollmann, and pianist Steven Blier turn their attention to La Belle Époque and music by Fauré, Hahn, Roussel, Satie, and Chabrier. (Greenwich House Music School, 46 Barrow St. 242-4770. Feb. 14 at 5.)

Richard Goode—The pianist plays Beethoven's Six Bagatelles (Op. 126) and ''Eroica'' Variations, as well as Schubert's Sonata in B-Flat (D. 960). (Metropolitan Museum. Feb. 14 at 8.)

Parnassus—Presenting chamber works by George Edwards, Gus Janssen, Andrew Imbrie (the New York première of his ''Five Roethke Songs''), Stephen Hartke, and Stravinsky; with soprano Susan Narucki. (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. 874-5210. Feb. 15 at 8.)

Chopin Considered—Pianist and author David Dubal continues his lecture-and-performance survey of the music of Chopin, with Juilliard students providing the performances. In this installment, Mr. Dubal considers how Chopin's works figured in the world of the pianist. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Feb. 16 at 7.)

David Owen Norris—In Kalamazoo, Michigan, there lived a man named Irving S. Gilmore, whose passions were his department store (which grew and grew) and the piano. He arranged that a portion of his hundred-million-dollar estate should go toward establishing a piano festival to enrich the cultural life of his city. The Gilmore Festival's most prominent activity is to select (surreptitiously) and support (generously) an outstanding pianist who might otherwise fall between the cracks. The first Gilmore Artist is an Englishman, David Owen Norris (known simply as Norris to fans of his B B C radio show), whose unorthodox ideas about performing will either delight or enrage audiences. In his New York début recital, Mr. Norris will perform Haydn's C-Major Fantasia, Book One of Debussy's Études, a Valse from Walton's ''Façade,'' three Intermezzi (Op. 117) by Brahms, Messiaen's ''Quatre Études Rhythmiques,'' and his own elaborate transcriptions of three Joni Mitchell songs. (Miller Theatre. Feb. 16 at 8.)

James Tocco—How strange and unfortunate that Leonard Bernstein, gifted as both a composer and a pianist (among other things), wrote a mere smattering of solo-piano music. Mr. Tocco, a pianist especially noted for his interpretations of American music, will perform the lion's share of Bernstein's solo-keyboard oeuvre—his ''Seven Anniversaries'' and ''Touches (Chorale, Eight Variations and Coda)''—as well as Copland's ''Piano Fantasy,'' ''Four Piano Blues,'' and ''El Salón México'' (as arranged by Bernstein). (Merkin Concert Hall. Feb. 16 at 8.)

Jean-Efflam Bavouzet—''Piano night'' in New York will be rounded out by the New York début recital of this French pianist, who will perform Haydn's Sonata No. 46 (in A-Flat), études by Debussy and Maurice Ohana, two movements from Ravel's ''Miroirs,'' Liszt's ''Grand Solo de Concert,'' and Bartók's ''Dance Suite.'' Presented by Young Concert Artists. (92nd Street Y. Feb. 16 at 8.)

JAZZ/POP/ROCK PERSONAL APPEARANCES

"Prelude to a Kiss"—Lincoln Center offers musical flowers and chocolates in the form of a program called ''Prelude to a Kiss: Jazz for Valentines.'' The evening is essentially a showcase for the splendid singer Betty Carter, a saccharine-free but nevertheless highly emotional performer. The program also features tenor saxophonists Jimmy Heath and Harold Ashby, trumpeter Roy Hargrove, and several players that backed Ms. Carter on her marvellous 1992 album, ''It's Not About the Melody'': Mulgrew Miller (piano), Christian McBride (bass), and Lewis Nash

MUSIC—Cont'd

(drums). Betty Carter's approach to a song is both lyrical and surrealistic. Her ability to conjure up a rich nocturnal mood and her invariably adventurous transformation of melody guarantee a lush and thrilling way to celebrate romance. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Feb. 14 at 8.)

Duran Duran—After the sobering sales disaster of their previous album, "Liberty" (1990), which basically stank, these aging Europouters girded their loins and got back to work making catchy video pop. The band has been miraculously restored to the Top Ten with the release of a dreamy junk-food single called "Ordinary World," from a pending comeback album. By virtue of having been on MTV at the very start, Duran Duran is both ancient history and eerily familiar. (Hey, is there any new Cyndi Lauper product out there?) Bravely bucking the trends, the band will play acoustic for these shows. (Academy Theatre, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Feb. 12 at 7:30 and 11.)

Shirley Bassey—With Mario Cantone. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Feb. 10-11 at 8.)

"Highlights in Jazz"—Presenting the Count Basie Orchestra, conducted by Frank Foster. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Feb. 11 at 8.)

"Friends of Alec Wilder" Concert—Jackie Cain and Roy Kral, Marlene VerPlanck, and others. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Feb. 13 at 2. For reservations, call 989-3426.)

"Heavenly Jazz"—Presenting Junior Mance, Joe Temperley, and Paul West. (Church of the Heavenly Rest, Fifth Ave. at 90th St. Feb. 14 at 5. Tickets at the door on the afternoon of the concert.)

André Previn Jazz Trio—Mr. Previn at the piano, Ray Brown on bass, and Mundell Lowe on guitar. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Feb. 14 at 7:30.)

Salsa Fiesta—Oscar D'Leon, Luis Enrique, Orquesta de la Luz, and others. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Feb. 14 at 8.)

SPORTS

HOME TEAMS

Knicks—Vs. the Houston Rockets, Feb. 11. . . . ¶ Vs. the Dallas Mavericks, Feb. 16. (Game time, 7:30.)

Nets—Vs. the Detroit Pistons, Feb. 10 at 8. . . . ¶ Vs. the Miami Heat, Feb. 14 at 5. . . . ¶ Vs. the Milwaukee Bucks, Feb. 16 at 7:30.

Rangers—Vs. the Pittsburgh Penguins, Feb. 10 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the Islanders, Feb. 12 at 7:30. . . . ¶ Vs. the St. Louis Blues, Feb. 15 at 1.

Islanders—Vs. the Rangers, Feb. 13. . . . ¶ Vs. the Edmonton Oilers, Feb. 16. (Game time, 7:35.)

Devils—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Feb. 13 at 2:05.

(The Knicks and the Rangers play at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Islanders at the Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300; and the Nets and the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900.)

RACING

Horses—At Aqueduct: Daily, except Tuesdays, at 12:30. . . . **trotting** at Yonkers Raceway: Mondays through Saturdays at 8 and Tuesdays at 1; Sundays at 6:45. . . . At the Meadowlands: Weeknights at 7:30.

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Be Mine—If candy, a card, or even a mink doesn't seem like quite enough to say "I love you," maybe one of the following events, all of which occur on Feb. 14, can convey it to your sweetheart for you.

. . .**Walking On Air**—At 1: Take a "Big Apple Love Affairs" tour; sponsored by Adventure on a Shoestring. For more information, call 265-2663. . . . ¶ At 2: Love, Greenwich Village-style, is the focus of a walk highlighting the famous love stories of Manhattan's romantic enclave; sponsored by Sidewalks of New York. For more information, call 517-0201. . . . ¶ At 2: The Urban Park Rangers invite you and your valentine to visit off-the-beaten-track romantic spots in Central Park. (Meets at 72nd St. and Central Park W. No tickets necessary.)

. . .**Tiptoe Through the Tulips**—Stroll through the "Love in Bloom" exhibit of forced bulbs and shrubs, at the Steinhardt Conservatory of the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, then take in the jazz concert that begins at 2:30. (1000 Washington Ave., near Grand Army Plaza. No tickets necessary. The Conservatory is open Tuesdays through Sundays, from 10 to 4. "Love in Bloom" runs through Feb. 28.)

. . .**Words of Love**—From 3 to 6: The Poetry Project's annual reading on the subject of love includes such writers as Ric Ocasek, Eileen Myles, and Mike Topp. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the day of the reading.). . . ¶ At 8: Jane Pauley, Tom Brokaw, and Nora Ephron will chat with Roger Rosenblatt about male/female relationships. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the discussion.). . . ¶ At 8: David Feinberg and A. M. Homes, among others, will read from a new anthology, "Love Is Strange: Stories of Postmodern Romance." (Fez, at Time Café, 380 Lafayette St. No tickets necessary.)

Lorde Laud—Poets Lucille Clifton, Jewelle Gomez, and Sonia Sanchez, among others, will honor the late poet Audre Lorde, who wrote in her poem "Memorial": "You may sit beside me/silent as a breath/only those who stay dead/shall remember death." (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. Feb. 10 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the tribute.)

Portraits by the Artists—Portrait artists working in all sorts of mediums, from charcoal to collage, will be on hand to do your likeness, for a mere two dollars a minute. Sponsored by Artists Talk on Art. (SoHo Photo Gallery, 15 White St. Feb. 12, from 7 to 11. Tickets at the door on the evening of the event. Admission can be applied to the cost of a portrait.)

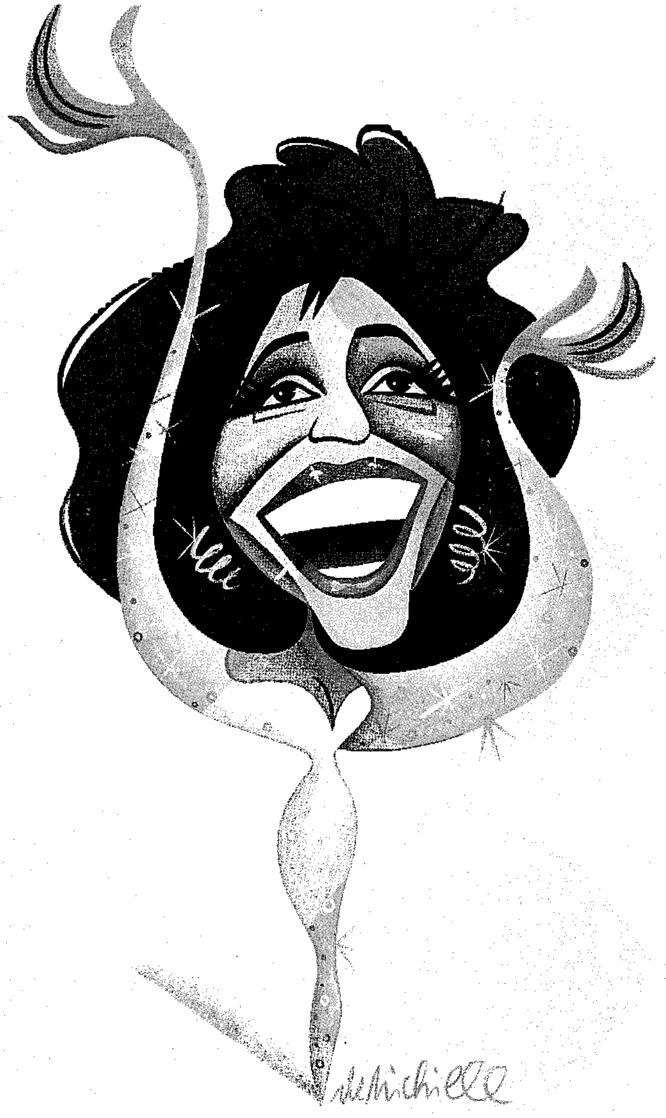
Editors at the Library—Feb. 10 at 6: James B. Stewart will speak about his work as an editor and writer. . . . Feb. 16 at 6: Lewis Lapham, longtime editor of *Harper's*, will will discuss his métier. (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.)

Readings—Feb. 10 at 6:30: As part of the Selected Shorts series, Mary Beth Hurt and Stephen Lang will read stories by Antonya Nelson and Laura Cunningham, in the highlight of an evening of "His and Hers." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . . ¶ Feb. 10 at 8: Novelist and poet Michael Brownstein and mystery writer Walter Mosley will read from their own work. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.). . .¶ Feb. 11 at 8: Dale Peck and Christopher Coe will read from their own fiction. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.)

Talks—Feb. 10 at 6: Boston *Globe* reporter Wil Haygood will discuss his biography, "King of the Cats: The Life and Times of Adam Clayton Powell, Jr." (Countee Cullen Branch of the New York Public Library, 104 W. 136th St. No tickets necessary.). . . ¶ Feb. 11 at 7: Charlayne Hunter-Gault will discuss her memoir, "In My Place." (Brentano's, Fifth Ave. at 48th St. No tickets necessary.)

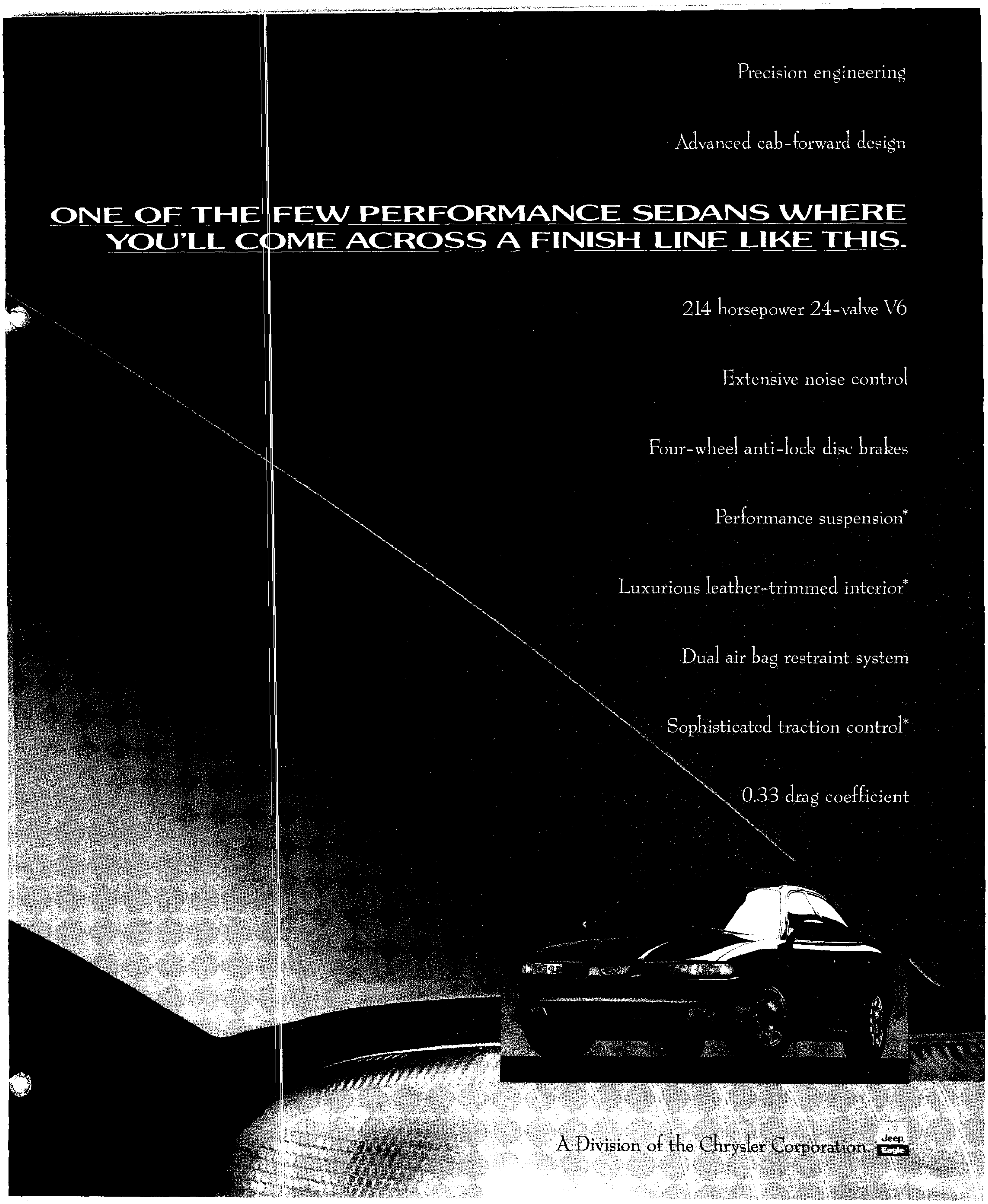
Walks—Feb. 13 at 11: Tour artsy Tribeca; sponsored by Eye On Art Tours. For more information, call 877-5117. . . . ¶ Feb. 13 at 1: Tour of the Henry Street Settlement; sponsored by the Municipal Art Society. For more information, call 439-1049. . . . ¶ Feb. 14 at 10:30: A moderate-paced walk along the Harlem River, under several bridges, and past Yankee Stadium; sponsored by Shorewalkers, Inc. For more information, call 663-2167. . . . ¶ Feb. 15 at 1: Celebrate Presidents' Day with a walk around Washington's and Lincoln's lower Manhattan; sponsored by Big Onion Walking Tours. For more information, call 439-1090.

Memorandum—Presidents' Day will be observed on Feb. 15.



Shirley Bassey at Carnegie Hall.

ROBERT DEMICHIELL



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

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			10	11	12	13
14	15	16				

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN "MOVIES IN BRIEF," STARTING ON PAGE 24.

EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000)
Theatre 1: "Enchanted April" (directed by Mike Newell).
Theatre 2: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 3: "Peter's Friends" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 11: "A Captive in the Land" (John Berry). From Feb. 12: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Bad Lieutenant" (†).

Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171)
Through Feb. 11: (Separate admissions) "China, My Sorrow" (1989, Dai Sijie; in Mandarin); "In Advance of the Landing" (Don Curtis); and two different programs of recent short films from Brazil.
From Feb. 12: A series of films about Malcolm X.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel), with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster.
Theatre 2: "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price).
Theatre 3: "Sniper" (†).

Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th. (982-0400)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Bob Roberts" (Tim Robbins). From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton.
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "A Few Good Men" (†). From Feb. 12: "Dead Alive" (Peter Jackson).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Malcolm X" (†). From Feb. 12: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 4: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 5: "Damage" (†).
Theatre 6: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).
Theatre 7: Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon). From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Feb. 11: A festival of Audrey Hepburn films.
From Feb. 12: "Together Alone" (1991, P. J. Castellaneta); and "The Living End" (Gregg Araki).

Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th. (529-6799)
Theatre 1: "The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "Alive" (Frank Marshall). From Feb. 12: "Love Field" (†).
Theatre 3: "Volere Volare" (†).
Theatre 4: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 5: "Howards End" (James Ivory).
Theatre 6: "Used People" (†).
Theatre 7: "Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th. (260-8000)
Theatre 1: "Sniper" (†).
Theatre 2: Interfilm.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price), with Terence Knox. From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton.
Theatre 4: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel), with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster.
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 11: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano). From Feb. 12: "Love Field" (†).
Theatre 6: "Aladdin" (†).

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Flirting" (John Duigan).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
"The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.

Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th. (689-6548)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Alive" (Frank Marshall). From Feb. 12: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: "Body of Evidence" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon). From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†).
Theatre 4: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).

34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Matinee" (†). From Feb. 12: "Love Field" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "Chaplin" (Richard Attenborough), with Robert Downey, Jr. From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price). From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton and Lara Flynn Boyle.

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
Theatre 1: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 2: "Family Prayers" (Scott Rosenfelt).

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Hoffa" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino).

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Alive" (Frank Marshall). From Feb. 12: "Dead Alive" (Peter Jackson).
Theatre 2: "Aladdin" (†).

59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th. (759-4630)
(Separate admissions) "Body of Evidence" (†); and "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price).

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Used People" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.

Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022)
Theatre 1: "The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke).
Theatre 2: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 3: "Damage" (†).

First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd. (752-4600)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano). From Feb. 12: "Strictly Ballroom" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†). From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.
Theatre 3: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1."
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 11: "Scent of a Woman" (†). From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†)
Theatre 5: "Matinee" (†).
Theatre 6: "Scent of a Woman" (†).

Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: "Sniper" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel), with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"A Few Good Men" (†).

New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "The Bodyguard" (†). From Feb. 12: "Love Field" (†)
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon). From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton.

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Volere Volare" (†).

Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Unforgiven" (Clint Eastwood).

East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Feb. 11: "Body of Evidence" (†).
From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton and Lara Flynn Boyle.

Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th. (534-1880)
Theatre 1: "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (†).

Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (876-2400)
Theatre 1: "Sniper" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon). From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell.
Theatre 4: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).
Theatre 5: Through Feb. 11: "Alive" (Frank Marshall). From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†)
Theatre 6: "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price).
Theatre 7: "Sommersby" (Jon Amiel), with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Matinee" (†). From Feb. 12: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: "Aladdin" (†).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Theatre 1: "Utz" (directed by George Sluizer), with Armin Mueller-Stahl, Brenda Fricker, Peter Riegert, and Paul Scofield.
Theatre 2: See listings under Revival Houses.
Theatre 3: "Guncrazy" (Tamra Davis), with Drew Barrymore and James LeGros.

Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Matinee" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Feb. 11: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†). From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French).
Theatre 2: "Reservoir Dogs" (Quentin Tarantino), with Harvey Keitel.
Theatre 3: "Rain Without Thunder" (Gary Bennett).
Theatre 4: "The Match Factory Girl" (Aki Kaurismaki, in Finnish).

Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd. (691-4744)
Theatre 1: "A Few Good Men" (†).
Theatre 2: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 11: "Scent of a Woman" (†). From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.
Theatre 5: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 6: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†).
Theatre 7: "Matinee" (†).
Theatre 8: "Used People" (†).
Theatre 9: Through Feb. 11: "The Vanishing." From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "Body of Evidence" (†).
Theatre 2: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon). From Feb. 12: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Aladdin" (†).

Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583)
Theatre 1: "Hoffa" (†).
Theatre 2: "Chaplin" (Richard Attenborough), with Robert Downey, Jr.
Theatre 3: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†).
Theatre 4: "Enchanted April" (Mike Newell).
Theatre 5: "Forever Young" (Steve Miner).
Theatre 6: "A River Runs Through It" (Robert Redford).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
Through Feb. 11: "A Few Good Men" (†).
From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Feb. 11: "Malcolm X" (†).
From Feb. 12: "Riff-Raff" (Ken Loach).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"Damage" (†).

Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Theatre 1: "Peter's Friends" (†).
Theatre 2: "Rain Without Thunder" (Gary Bennett).

Fine Arts, 4 W. 58th. (980-5656)
"The Lover" (Jean-Jacques Annaud).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
"Howards End" (James Ivory).

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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Sommersby" (Jon Amiel), with Richard Gere and Jodie Foster.

62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd. (265-7466)
Through Feb. 11: "Used People" (†).
From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†).

Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "Tous les Matins du Monde" (Alain Corneau, in French).
Theatre 2: "Indochine" (Régis Wargnier, in French), with Catherine Deneuve.
Theatre 3: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 4: "The Crying Game" (†).
Theatre 5: "Indochine."
Theatre 6: "The Oak" (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Scent of a Woman" (†).

84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Damage" (†).
Theatre 2: "Sniper" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "The Cemetery Club" (Bill Duke). From Feb. 12: "Groundhog Day" (Harold Ramis), with Bill Murray.
Theatre 4: Through Feb. 11: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano). From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland).
Theatre 5: "Aladdin" (†).
Theatre 6: "A Few Good Men" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Lorenzo's Oil" (†).
Theatre 2: "Matinee" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Vanishing" (George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges and Kiefer Sutherland.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "The Vanishing" (directed by George Sluizer), with Jeff Bridges.
Theatre 2: "Body of Evidence" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Bodyguard" (†).
Theatre 4: "Malcolm X" (†).
Theatre 5: "Sniper" (†).
Theatre 6: "National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1" (Gene Quintano).
Theatre 7: Through Feb. 11: "Sniper" (†). From Feb. 12: "Dead Alive" (Peter Jackson).

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (302-0494)
Through Feb. 11: "Alive" (Frank Marshall).
From Feb. 12: "Untamed Heart" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 1: Through Feb. 11: "Children of the Corn II: The Final Sacrifice" (David Price), Terence Knox. From Feb. 12: "Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey" (Duwayne Dunham).
Theatre 2: "Bad Lieutenant" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Feb. 11: "Hexed" (Alan Spencer). From Feb. 12: "Love Field" (†).

Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
Through Feb. 11: "Nowhere to Run" (Robert Harmon).
From Feb. 12: "The Temp" (Tom Holland), with Timothy Hutton and Lara Flynn Boyle.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Scent of a Woman" (†).
Theatre 2: "Matinee" (†).

REVIVAL HOUSES

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)
Feb. 10: "Trade Winds" (1939, directed by Tay Garnett), with Joan Bennett; and "Smash-Up" (1947, Stuart Heisler), with Susan Hayward.
Feb. 11: "The Senator Was Indiscreet" (†); and "Dulcy" (1940, S. Sylvan Simon).
Feb. 12-13: "Citizen Kane" (1941, Orson Welles), with Welles; and "Foreign Correspondent" (1940, Alfred Hitchcock), with Joel McCrea and Laraine Day.
Feb. 14-15: "The Little Foxes" (1941, William Wyler), with Bette Davis and Herbert Marshall; and "Wuthering Heights" (1939, Wyler), with Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier.
Feb. 16: "The Male Animal" (1942, Elliott Nugent and Wolfgang Reinhardt); and "The Battle of the Sexes" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Feb. 10: "The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner" (1962, Tony Richardson); and "Hamlet" (†).
Feb. 11: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French); and "Panique" (1946, Julien Duvivier; in French).
Feb. 12-13: "The Lady from Shanghai" (1948, Orson Welles), with Rita Hayworth; and "Gilda" (1946, Charles Vidor), with Hayworth and Glenn Ford.
Feb. 14: "Playtime" (1967, Jacques Tati) and "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953, Jacques Tati; in French), both with Tati.
Feb. 15: "Wild Strawberries" (1957, Ingmar Bergman; in Swedish); and "Shame" (1968, Bergman; in Swedish).
Feb. 16: "Slaughterhouse-Five" (1972, George Roy Hill), with Michael Sacks; and "Catch-22" (1970, Mike Nichols), with Alan Arkin.

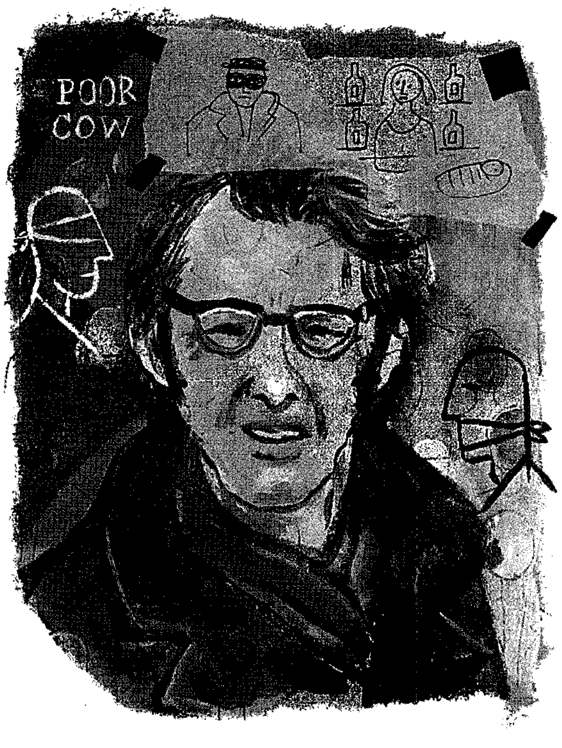
FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Feb. 11 at 3 and 6: "The Pool: Reflections of the Japanese-Canadian Internment" (1992, directed by Mark de Valk).... ¶ Feb. 12 at 2:30 and Feb. 14 at 5: "Dédée" (1948, Yves Allégret; in French).... ¶ Feb. 12 at 3 and 6 and Feb. 13-15 at 2:30 and 5: Eight different programs of short films from the Janus Films Collection.... ¶ Feb. 12 at 6: "L'Age d'Or" (1930, Luis Buñuel; in French).... ¶ Feb. 13 at 2 and Feb. 16 at 2:30: "The Sound of Trumpets" (1961, Ermanno Olmi; in Italian).... ¶ Feb. 13 at 5: "Ugetsu" (1953, Kenji Mizoguchi; in Japanese).... ¶ Feb. 14 at 2 and Feb. 16 at 6: "The Rules of the Game" (1939, Jean Renoir; in French).... ¶ Feb. 15 at 2: "Cobra" (1925, Joseph Henaberry; a silent film), with Rudolph Valentino.... ¶ Feb. 15 at 5: "Broken Blossoms" (†).

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level. (875-5600)—Feb. 10 at 2 and 6: "The Gamekeeper" (1980, Ken Loach).... ¶ Feb. 10 at 4 and Feb. 11 at 8:45: "Looks and Smiles" (1981, Loach).... ¶ Feb. 11 at 2 and 6:30 and Feb. 12-13 at 4:15 and 8:45: "Hidden Agenda" (see below).... ¶ Feb. 11 at 4:15, Feb. 12 at 2 and 6:30, and Feb. 13 at 6:30: "Singing the Blues in Red" (1988, Loach; in German and English).... ¶ Feb. 13-14 at 2: "Ronia, the Robber's Daughter" (1984, Tage Danielsson).... ¶ Feb. 14 at 4:30 and 7 and Feb. 15 at 2, 4:30, 7, and 9:30: "The Red Shoes" (1948, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger).... ¶ Feb. 16 at 2, 5:45 and 9:15: "Black Narcissus" (1947, Powell and Pressburger).... ¶ Feb. 16 at 4 and 7:45: "The Edge of the World" (1937, Powell).

MOVIES IN BRIEF

SEE PRECEDING PAGES FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS. IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.



Ken Loach

JOSH GOSFIELD

The Troubles

THE left-wing British filmmaker Ken Loach knows how to bring flavor and momentum to documentary-style features, and more famous directors (such as Stephen Frears) have hailed him as a master. Although his work can be numbingly downbeat and ideologically straitjacketed, the 1990 political thriller "Hidden Agenda" (playing February 11-13, at the Walter Reade Theatre) is his most exciting film in recent years. Written by Jim Allen, its "can you top this?" effrontery and combination of casualness and kapow hurtle an audience past the glum naturalism and shaky plot for at least two thirds of the running time. Loach and Allen seize on some central atrocities of the undeclared war in Northern Ireland—the use of torture and ambushes to quell Catholic rebellion—and make them the pegs for an exposé that leads all the way up to 10 Downing Street.

The suspense hook is the assassination of an American civil-rights lawyer by a "cowboy" wing of the security forces. To head off public outcry, the Government calls in Peter Kerrigan (Brian Cox), a special investigator known for his independent probing. Cox resembles Albert Finney in brooding looks and mulish intensity; he develops Kerrigan's outrage with cumulative power. But at a crucial point Kerrigan simply confronts a high-level culprit and spills the beans. "Hidden Agenda" displays the skittering realism of Loach's craft as well as the grim purposefulness that sometimes undercuts it.

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael, Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow.)

Aladdin—Spiffy, inventive, and hilarious. The directors, John Musker and Ron Clements, who collaborated on the screenplay with Ted Elliott and Terry Rossio, streamline the traditional Aladdin story into a contest between the boy and a towering vizier-wizard named Jafar, Aladdin's rival for the hand of the Sultan's daughter, Princess Jasmine. What makes this wisecracking cartoon such intense, giddy fun is the eruption of uninhibited parody that Robin Williams provides as the voice of the Genie in Aladdin's lamp. The Genie mutates into dozens of variations on himself as Williams impersonates everyone from William F. Buckley, Jr., to Arsenio Hall. The animators' quick-draw craftsmanship keeps up with Williams' breakaway creativity. With the voices of Scott Weinger, Linda Larkin, Jonathan Freeman, and Gilbert Gottfried (who unexpectedly triumphs as Jafar's tough parrot, Iago); composer Alan Menken contributes five songs, with lyrics by Tim Rice and the late Howard Ashman.—M.S. (Reviewed in our issue of 11/30/92.) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, 86th Street East Twin, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

Bad Lieutenant—The Stations of the Cross. It's supposed to be about redemption; actually, it's beyond redemption. Harvey Keitel plays a degenerate New York City cop who gambles disastrously on the Mets, ingests drugs and booze almost continuously, grabs stolen money, and sexually harasses a couple of Jersey girls while masturbating in the street. On the plus side, a brutally raped nun forgives her attackers and inspires Keitel to open his heart to Jesus, who climbs off the Cross and appears to him in a vision. Keitel overacts in a vacuum—he writhes in Method Hell. And Abel Ferrara, who co-wrote the script with Zoe Lund, directs in a relentless low-down style that dissipates even the shock value. Yes, you get to see Harvey Keitel's penis; the only surprise is that Jesus keeps His under wraps.—M.S. (Angelika Film Center, and Embassy.)

The Battle of the Sexes (1960)—The old order, represented by Peter Sellers as the head accountant of a Scottish firm rich in tradition, triumphing over the new, represented by Constance Cummings as an interloping American efficiency expert. This British film was adapted from the James Thurber story "The Catbird Seat," but as directed by Charles Crichton it's not as funny as it's meant to be. With Robert Morley as the laird in charge of the firm.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 16.)

The Bodyguard—According to the screenwriter (and co-producer), Lawrence Kasdan, the script for this picture was written in 1975 as a possible vehicle for Steve McQueen. In lieu of McQueen, Kevin Costner plays the title character, a retired Secret Service man who is hired to protect a famous singer (played by Whitney Houston). Costner sports a fuzzy crewcut that's more travesty than homage, and he's very grim; he looks as if he were still troubled by inconsistencies in the Warren Commission report. Houston flings herself repeatedly at the taciturn hero, begging him for both sex and manly state-of-the-art security. It is, perhaps, a sign of progress that a big-budget commercial picture like this can feature a romance between a white man and a black woman without ever making the racial difference an issue. It would be a more encouraging sign if the movie were any good. Directed by Mick Jackson.—T.R. (12/14/92) (Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ New York Twin; through Feb. 11.)

Body of Evidence—Madonna plays a woman on trial for deliberately inducing a fatal coronary in her wealthy older lover by means of overstrenuous sadomasochistic sex. Aside from morons, the only viewers likely to be thrilled by this star vehicle are her academic fans: they gaze avidly, deconstructing her with their eyes. For them, the turn-on might be the question: In the light of Sharon Stone's brilliant appropriation of Madonna's persona in "Basic

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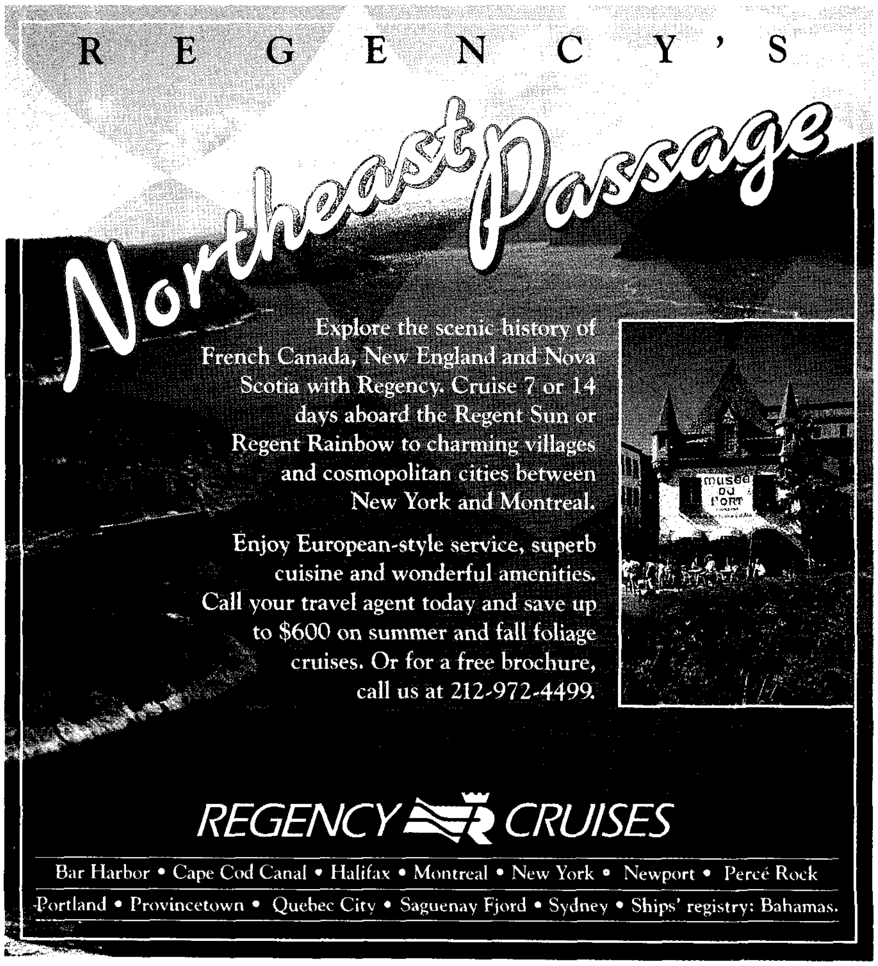

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

"Instinct," is Madonna still the author of Madonna? To the layman, the answer to that one is obvious. Stone's "Madonna" is so much wittier and sexier than its model that it obliterates the original: it turns the "real" Madonna into an immaterial girl. Also with Willem Dafoe, Anne Archer, Joe Mantegna, and Julianne Moore. The ridiculous screenplay is credited to Brad Mirman; the sluggish direction is by Uli Edel.—T.R. (1/25/93) (Murray Hill Cinemas, 59th Street East Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ East 85th Street; through Feb. 11.)

Broken Blossoms (1919)—D. W. Griffith's stylized lyric tragedy—a small-scale film that is one of his most poetic, and one of his finest. With Lillian Gish as a childish waif (the source, possibly, of the Giulietta Masina role in "La Strada"), Donald Crisp as the brutal Zampan-like prizefighter, and Richard Barthelmess as the lonely Chinese dreamer. (The original prints were tinted and it was first exhibited with additional color—a "Chinese blue" glow thrown from the projection booth onto the screen.) Silent.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Feb. 15.)

The Crying Game—This amazing new movie by the Irish writer and director Neil Jordan ("Mona Lisa," "The Miracle") has the sure grip and the unstoppable momentum of a dream. Jordan tells the story of Fergus (Stephen Rea), a troubled I.R.A. gunman who undergoes a thorough emotional metamorphosis, and he makes the hero's change of heart moving and persuasive; the film inspires an irrational sort of trust, a willing suspension of something deeper and more fundamental than disbelief. The script is full of reversals and abrupt dislocations and, halfway through, the movie springs a huge, jaw-dropping surprise. Disorienting us isn't the ultimate aim of Jordan's artistic strategy, though; he jars us out of our accustomed responses to prepare us for the purer, more penetrating ones he really wants from us. The picture is a splendid entertainment—an elating, charmed sprint through all sorts of contemporary terrors.—T.R. (11/16/92) (Angelika Film Center, Sutton, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Damage—A middle-aged British politician (Jeremy Irons, looking and sounding alarmingly like Boris Karloff) falls in love with his son's girlfriend, a mysterious half-French beauty (Juliette Binoche). The screenplay—by David Hare, from Josephine Hart's sensationally stupid best-seller—aims to create a sense of tragic inevitability out of a banal infidelity story: what it achieves is lethal predictability. For almost two hours, the movie alternates joyless, desperate (but tastefully lit) couplings with painfully awkward family gatherings; then somebody dies and everybody's sad and it's over. Director Louis Malle has played artistic sugar daddy to Hart's shallow little novel—provided a lavishly appointed flat for a story that isn't worth a cheap motel room. Also with Miranda Richardson (who is dreadful), Rupert Graves, Ian Bannen, and Leslie Caron.—T.R. (1/25/93) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema 3rd Avenue, 57th St. Playhouse, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

A Few Good Men—Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson square off in this yuppie version of "The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial," with Cruise as a glib, Harvard-trained Navy lawyer defending two Marines accused of murder, and Nicholson as the Captain Queeg-like officer who set the crime in motion. The writer, Aaron Sorkin (who adapted his own hit play), and the director, Rob Reiner, seem to think the story has something to say about legal and military honor. They take issues that have been chewed over for centuries and finally succeed in reducing them to cud. The whole film, with its steady, important-picture pacing, its foursquare visual style, and its pseudo-profundity, is a piece of glorified banality. Nicholson boasts a couple of bravura scenes but Kevin Bacon gives the most persuasive performance, as the no-nonsense prosecutor.—M.S. (12/14/92) (Village Theatre VII, 34th St. East, Beekman, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex. . . . ¶ Ziegfeld; through Feb. 11.)

Hamlet (1969)—Bearded, and with a nasal twang, Nicol Williamson is a surly Hamlet, deliberately, wretchedly unattractive. Williamson's acting is all pathos and vituperation, snarls and tantrums. This movie, directed by Tony Richardson, isn't a reinterpretation of "Hamlet" but an exploitation of what's worst in Nicol Williamson as an actor; it isn't tragic or absurdist—it's just cheap Jacobean-Mod, sexed up whenever possible. There are a few fine moments: Roger Livesey's entrance with the players provides a touch of humanity; he is in beautiful cracked voice and fine music-hall spirit. And Anthony Hopkins is an appealing though very young Claudius—one rather wishes he were left in peace to rule the country, since Hamlet is obviously unfit. With Marianne Faithfull, Judy Parfitt, Gordon Jackson, Mark Dignam, and Michael Pennington.—P.K. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Feb. 10.)

Hoffa—The life of the flamboyant labor leader, who lay down with mobsters and got up with subpoenas, is a terrific subject for a movie—a story of corruption and power, like "Citizen Kane" and the "Godfather" pictures. But what director Danny DeVito and screenwriter David Mamet have done here couldn't have been predicted. They've made a two-hour-and-fifteen-minute movie that doesn't tell the story of Jimmy Hoffa; they've made his life inconsequential. Their Hoffa (Jack Nicholson) is just a blustery movie tough guy: he gives speeches whose content we aren't encouraged to think about; he pops up in the foreground of labor disputes that haven't been explained to us; he appears before investigative panels whose purposes are unclear, and is interrogated about crimes we've neither seen nor heard about. "Hoffa" tells us less about Hoffa than it does about Mamet's chronic nostalgia for the manly-man ethos of yesteryear—a romantic vision of America, where beefy, two-fisted giants once walked and thugs were thugs, not corporate weasels.—T.R. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (Gotham Cinema, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Worldwide Cinemas.)

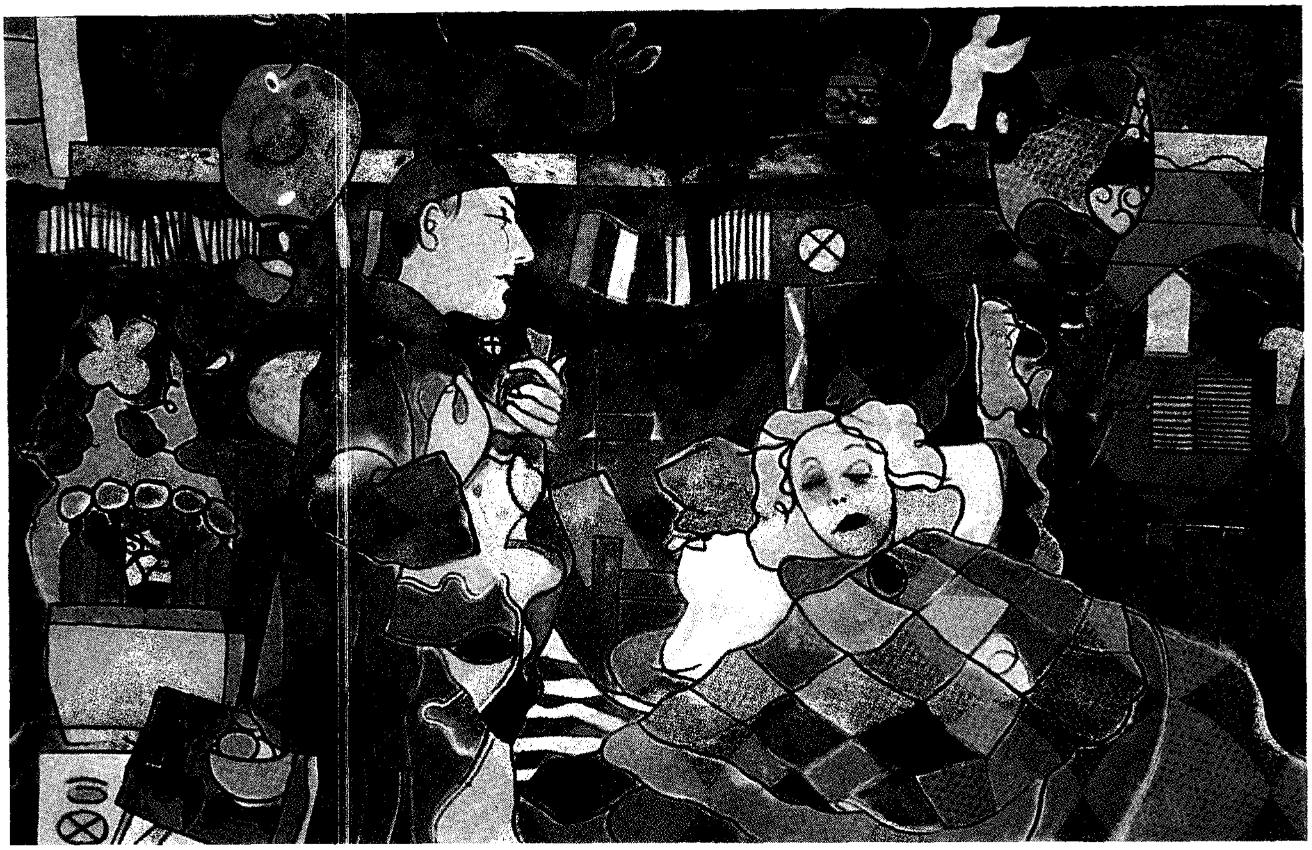
Lorenzo's Oil—Susan Sarandon and Nick Nolte portray an extraordinary (real-life) couple named Michaela and Augusto Odone, whose five-year-old son, Lorenzo, is found to have an extremely rare, ruthlessly degenerative, incurable disease. Frustrated by the inadequacy of available therapies and outraged by the primitive state of knowledge about the disease, the Odones won't accept the inevitability of his fate until they've studied the disease thoroughly. It's easy to imagine the Odones' courage and tenacity processed by Hollywood into the sort of shrink-wrapped package of uplift that has, over the years, given the loftiest qualities of the human spirit a really bad name. But director George Miller, a former doctor best known for the punk-inflected "Mad Max" series of action movies, doesn't treat his characters reverently, and explains the data to us patiently, slowly, so we get caught up in the medical mystery. The result is an almost freak occurence: an inspirational drama that's genuinely inspiring.—T.R. (1/11/93) (Chelsea Cinemas, Worldwide Cinemas, and Metro Cinema. . . . ¶ First & 62nd Cinemas, and Waverly; through Feb. 11)

Love Field—Jonathan Kaplan's movie begins in Dallas on the day of John Kennedy's assassination and follows its heroine, a Kennedy-worshipping married woman named Lurene (Michelle Pfeiffer), as she embarks on a journey from Dallas to Washington, where she hopes to attend the President's funeral. Along the way, she gets herself tangled up in the lives of a quiet young black man, Paul (Dennis Haysbert), and his eight-year-old daughter, Jonell (Stephanie McFadden), whom she has met on a bus; before long, the script (by Don Roos) contrives to set them all on the run, outlaw-style, in a stolen car. Lurene and Paul become lovers. The rhythm is odd: this is a chase picture that moves at the Sunday-drive pace of the stately sedan in "Driving Miss Daisy." (The filmmakers seem to have taken to heart the Supreme Court's famous desegregation formula: they proceed to the climax with all deliberate speed.) The movie is full of subtle, sharply observed, and emotionally convincing scenes, and its attitude toward the main characters is sensibly free of historical hindsight. The filmmakers err in the direction of modesty and tact; they stick to a flat, lulling TV-movie tone. But Pfeiffer's performance—energetic, funny, and lucid—keeps lifting the picture above its limitations. The leisurely rhythm that Kaplan and Roos establish is like a steady, familiar slow-blues groove to set off her spectacular solo. Also with Brian Kerwin and Louise Latham.—T.R. (12/14/92) (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, New York Twin, and Embassy; starting Feb. 12.)

Malcolm X—There's a great deal of passion in Spike Lee's three-hour-and-twenty-minute adaptation of "The Autobiography of Malcolm X," but it's not an artist's passion. Malcolm, who achieved fame in the early sixties as a compelling spokesman for the black-pride philosophy of the Nation of Islam, is an unlikely hero for a big-studio prestige picture: he begins as a predatory street criminal, becomes a studious Muslim ascetic, and fulfills himself as a scourge. The ponderous rhythms of the great-man bio-pic only emphasize the impossibility of rendering this story with conventional movie-narrative means. Denzel Washington's performance as Malcolm gets off to a rocky start—for the first hour, he's required to play the hero as a teen-ager—but it gains authority as the movie goes along. This film's Malcolm isn't so much a character as an image: a statue for us to look up at in wonder. The script, credited to Lee and Arnold Perl, incorporates (haphazardly) scenes and ideas from a scenario written more than twenty years ago by James Baldwin.—T.R. (11/30/92) (Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Village Theatre VII, and Festival; through Feb. 11.)

Matinee—Joe Dante's film is a big-budget comedy about the joys of low-budget monster movies, and it's not quite cheesy enough to do justice to its subject. The action takes place in Key West during the Cuban missile crisis, of 1962. For the children and teen-agers in town, nuclear anxiety is mixed with anticipation of a different sort: they're psyched for the première of "Mant," a mutant-on-the-rampage picture about a creature who is "half man, half ant—all terror!" The movie's producer, Lawrence Woolsey (John Goodman), is coming to town, too, mostly to help the theatre manager rig the offscreen gimmickry that will give his cheaply made shocker the aura of a big event. (The trailer advertises special processes called Atomo-Vision and Rumble-Rama.) Dante and the screenwriter, Charlie Haas, treat him as a philosopher-king of schlock. The picture has its moments—especially in the black-and-white scenes from "Mant" itself—but it's disappointingly tame. Too often, the filmmakers settle for the gentle, amiable tone of a "Wonder Years" episode. Nostalgia for cultural innocence is a pretty thin emotion to base a feature film on. In the end, this feels like a memorabilia show, a collection of Kennedy-era artifacts preserved in glass cases. Also with Cathy Moriarty, Simon Fenton, Kellie Martin, Jesse White, and Dick Miller.—T.R. (2/8/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 34th Street Showplace, and 86th Street East Twin; through Feb. 11.)

The Oak—Lively, difficult stuff from the Romanian director Lucian Pintilie: a tale of private survival at the ragged end of the Ceausescu years. Maia Morgenstern plays Nela, the daughter of a dead party official, who pushes off to a provincial town and gets into all kinds of trouble; she also takes up with the local doctor (Razvan Vasilescu), although in this movie even love looks like trouble.



Richard Barthelmess and Lillian Gish in "Broken Blossoms."

RICHARD MERKIN

There are moments when Pintilie starts to preach, but they soon pass, and this maddening world resumes its pressure on his imagination. He has the courage of his own comedy, with an eye forever caught by offbeat details, especially military and medical; the very look of the movie, its casual brand of intensity, seems to buck the system. Bits of it barely make sense, but the characters don't mind, so why should you? In Romanian.—A.L. (2/1/93) (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Peter's Friends—Thirtyish college (Cambridge) chums, along with their significant others, gather in a big house in the English countryside and take turns flinging home truths and barbed one-liners at one another. Kenneth Branagh's film, written by Martin Bergman and Rita Rudner, is a British knock-off of "The Big Chill," and it's even more chilling than its glib American counterpart. The picture is meant to be funny and dramatic, but it plays like a horror movie: its world is one that, as a result of some unspeakable catastrophe, has been overrun by arrogant, self-absorbed poseurs. It's "Day of the Pseuds," in Twit-o-Vision. With Branagh, Rudner, Emma Thompson, Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, Imelda Staunton, Alphonsia Emmanuel, and Tony Slattery.—T.R. (2/8/93) (Angelika Film Center, and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

Scent of a Woman—Director Martin Brest and screenwriter Bo Goldman labor mightily to design a holiday-season heart-warmer about a middle-aged blind man and a troubled teen-ager (Chris O'Donnell), but fortunately their low intentions are undone by the star, Al Pacino, whose performance taps emotions too complex and too frightening to be resolved by the simple moral victory that ends the picture. His Frank Slade, a retired Army officer and former aide to L.B.J., is a bitter, misanthropic, profoundly depressed man, and the actor makes us feel the full weight of the character's hopelessness. This is acting that chills the heart beyond any possibility of warming. The filmmakers may dismiss the audience with a banal lesson written on the blackboard—"Smell the roses" is the gist—but by the end we're not paying much attention. We're still sorting out the ambiguities and uncomfortable truths that Pacino's great performance has let us in on.—T.R. (12/28/92-1/4/93) (First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Regency, and National Twin.)

The Senator Was Indiscreet (1947)—This satirical farce about political corruption is the only movie that the famous comedy writer George S. Kaufman ever directed. He doesn't show much talent for the medium; he gets his laughs by broad spoofing and over-emphatic wisecracks that seem pitched to the last row in the balcony. The film is disappointingly short on wit, especially if one considers that Nunnally Johnson was the producer and Charles MacArthur wrote the script (from a story by Edwin Lanham), but it's still tolerable in a dumb, burlesque sort of way. William Powell flails about, trying to be funny in the tired slapstick role of a windbag senator running for President; with Ella Raines, Peter Lind Hayes, Hans Conried, Allen Jenkins, Arleen Whelan, Ray Collins, Norma Varden, and an unbilled appearance by Myrna Loy.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Feb. 11.)

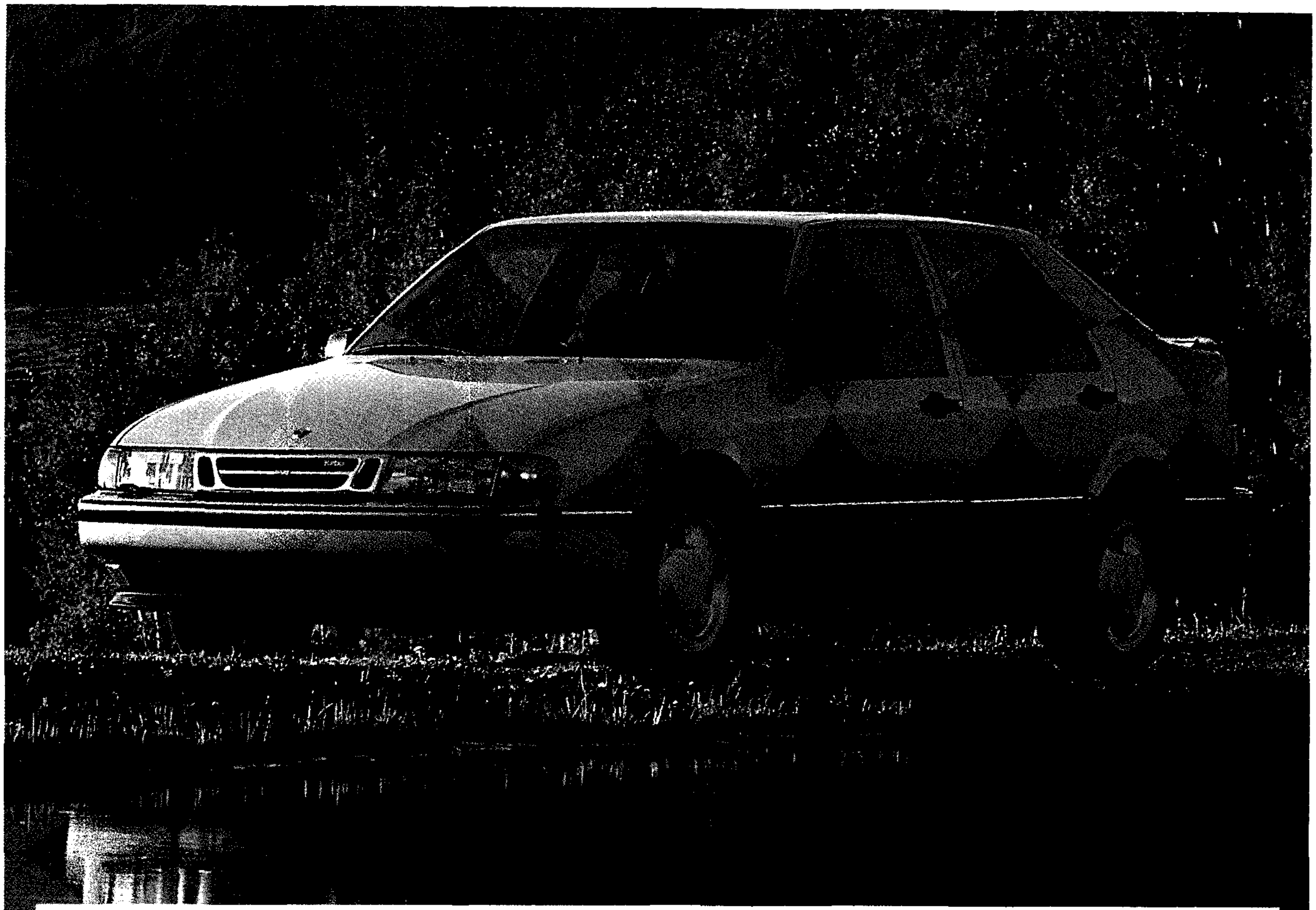
Sniper—Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. Bang. If it were up to Marine sniper Thomas Beckett (Tom Berenger), who believes in one bullet per kill, that would be the whole movie. But on a mission to eliminate a Panamanian warlord, Beckett's new partner—a Washington bureaucrat cum marksman named Miller (Billy Zane)—gums up the works. Miller is so callow that, when they stumble on a murdered priest, he asks, "Who would do something like that?" The screenwriters, Michael Frost Beckner and Crash Leyland, look through the wrong end of the gun sights: they try in vain to extract a psychological thriller from these two hollow men. The director, Luis Llosa, gives the action a surgical clarity, then sullies it with trick shots from the point of view of speeding bullets; the film veers between being a neutral analysis and a promo for assassins.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Strictly Ballroom—Directed by Baz Luhrmann. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Angelika Film Center, and First & 62nd Cinemas; starting Feb. 12.)

Untamed Heart—With Christian Slater, Marisa Tomei, and Rosie Perez; directed by Tony Bill. (Reviewed in this issue.) (Murray Hill Cinemas, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Embassy 1; starting Feb. 12.)

Used People—Life goes on—for the audience, seemingly forever—in yet another ethnic comedy-drama. Shirley MacLaine stars as an emotionally pinched Jewish widow in 1969 Queens who makes a date with an Italian charmer (Marcello Mastroianni) mere hours after her husband's funeral. The Jewish women are drab or neurotic, the Italian men are romantic or lusty. In the end, love conquers everything from religious differences to mental illness: everything, that is, except the forced eccentricity and bickering stereotypes in Todd Graff's script. Kathy Bates plays MacLaine's fat, unhappy daughter and Marcia Gay Harden her loony one (she's prone to celebrity impersonations); Jessica Tandy is MacLaine's crotchety mom. Directed by Beeban Kidron.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, Baronet, and Chelsea Cinemas. . . . ¶ 62nd & Broadway; through Feb. 11.)

Volere Volare—This romantic comedy from Maurizio Nichetti suffers from one small problem: there ain't much romance, and not a whole load of comedy, either. Nichetti's last movie, "The Icicle Thief," showed more intuitive wit; this one feels forced and spun-out, with a technical gag that goes well beyond a joke. Nichetti himself plays a timid little bozo who turns into a cartoon; but even then he's still a timid little bozo, so you don't really care either way. Luckily, the woman he fancies is played by Angela Finocchiaro, who is everything that Nichetti isn't—sexy, even-tempered, and free from vanity. The film is itchy and unsatisfying, but she calms it down. In Italian.—A.L. (2/1/93) (Village East Cinemas, and 68th St. Playhouse.)



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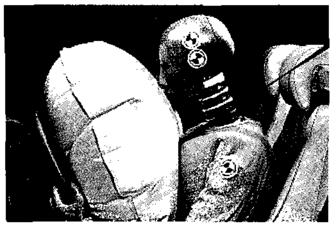

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THE
NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

The week before last, Steven Hoffenberg looked as if he might be on the way to becoming a great New York "character" and possibly the savior of the *Post* as well. Last week, he looked as if he would become neither. People who take over newspapers, however ill-suited to the role they may seem, nearly always enjoy a bit of a honeymoon, so desperately do journalists want to believe that everything will turn out all right. Mr. Hoffenberg did have a kind of a honeymoon at the *Post*, but it was exceptionally cool and exceptionally short. It began with a column by Mike McAlary, published on Wednesday, January 27th, two days after Mr. Hoffenberg appeared on the scene, under the headline "SHADY? YEAH! BUT I KINDA LIKE HIM—FOR NOW" (hardly the warmest of tributes, but still a sort of declaration of affection); it ended five days later, when Mr. McAlary and three of the *Post's* other top journalists, including its editor, Lou Colasuonno, decided to defect to the *Daily News*. It had not taken long for Mr. McAlary, who had written under that headline that Hoffenberg "may be a bum, but he's my bum," to decide that he wasn't his bum after all.

What had happened in the meantime? One thing that had happened was that Mr. McAlary's paycheck had bounced the day Hoffenberg took over and then it had bounced again. "He's been consistent in giving me a hundred-per-cent pay cut in the last two weeks," Mr. McAlary said over lunch last Wednesday at Maguire's Café, a journalists' haunt on Second Avenue, around the corner from the Forty-second Street headquarters of the *News*, where he was already at work. (One was reminded of the Czech-born Robert Maxwell, a former owner of the *News*, who had been jocularly known in his lifetime as "the bouncing Czech.") But Mr. McAlary said that check bouncing was by no means the only reason he decided to abandon Mr. Hoffenberg for the new owner of the *News*, Mortimer Zuckerman, whom he had described in a column only last month as "a filthy little dictator." "I called a lot of people Hoffenberg had been in business with, and I didn't like what I heard," Mr. McAlary said. He also became concerned that Mr. Hoffenberg, who was said to have made a huge fortune out of debt-collecting, might not be quite as rich as was generally thought. "Hoffenberg even asked Lou if he could help him raise more money," Mr. McAlary said, referring to Colasuonno. "He asked him if he could put pressure on two New York politicians, whom I won't name, to put pressure on his bankers to increase their loan. Lou refused."

NO TURNS
FRANKS
SAUSAGE
HOT DOG
DRINK

GARY PANTER

The reason that Mr. McAlary had felt some attraction toward Mr. Hoffenberg to begin with was his reckless way of talking. "He works without a net. He says whatever comes into his head." Especially seductive had been the frankness of Mr. Hoffenberg's comment, reported in Mr. McAlary's January 27th column, about why he wanted to own the *Post*. "I'm here for the glory," he had said. "I want to have a voice in New York City. I've made millions. Now I want some excitement." But, although Mr. Hoffenberg maintains that he plans a great future for the *Post*, Mr. McAlary has stopped believing him. "I think his intention is to fold the paper and sell the assets," he said. Why did he think that? "Because he is always carrying around this old inventory of Rupert Murdoch's that lists all the *Post's* assets, right down to the ashtrays. I think it gives a total value of forty-five million dollars."

Mr. McAlary said that during their farewell meeting he told Mr. Hoffenberg, "I can't work for you. You're a bad guy. How can I cover bad guys for the paper when I walk past your office every day?" Mr. Hoffenberg, urging him to stay at the *Post*, replied, "You can fill up the paper with bad things about *me*." (Mr. Hoffenberg did not return phone calls seeking his comments on Mr. McAlary's anecdotes.) But Mr. McAlary was unpersuaded and went to work for Mr. Zuckerman, who had forgiven him for calling him "a filthy little dictator." "Nobody plays fair in a street fight," Mr. Zuckerman had said. But how could Mr. McAlary accept employment from somebody else he appeared to despise? "Zuckerman wins by the comparison," he said. "It's like Mort invented this guy."

BAD STREETS

Two people were killed, one robber, one hostage. It was the morning of January 29th. It began at the Chemical Bank at Broadway and Ninety-first Street and ended a short while later a few feet from Riverside Drive, in a fusillade. Police killed one of the robbers and the hostage he was holding, a woman named Aurea Bonnie Vargas; she was shot in the chest on the sidewalk in front of the building she lived in. The reactions of her neighbors are variable. "This neighborhood isn't so bad. The bank is three blocks from here. You're gonna rob something, you go to a bank—that's where the money is, a bank not a cigarette store," says a man who runs a cigarette store on Broadway. A doorman from Romania says, "It's terrible around here, worse than a war." (Neighborhood opinion has it that the doorman, though he is brave, is an alarmist.) Judy Malcom, executive director of the Catholic Big Sisters, says, "Oh, it's awful. They should have let the robber get away rather than shoot the innocent girl, the hostage. The police work so hard it's cruel to complain about them, but that's what I think." Mark Moradian, of Iranian extraction, who has lived in New York for the last seventeen years, works at Barzini's, a produce-and-grocery store catercorner to the pillaged bank, and he says, "It's bad around here lately. The liquor store next door has been robbed twice. The bingo parlor in the next block has been robbed. Ninety-second and Ninety-third are bad streets. The prostitutes hang out there. Sometimes you have trouble getting along the sidewalk; the guys standing there block you."

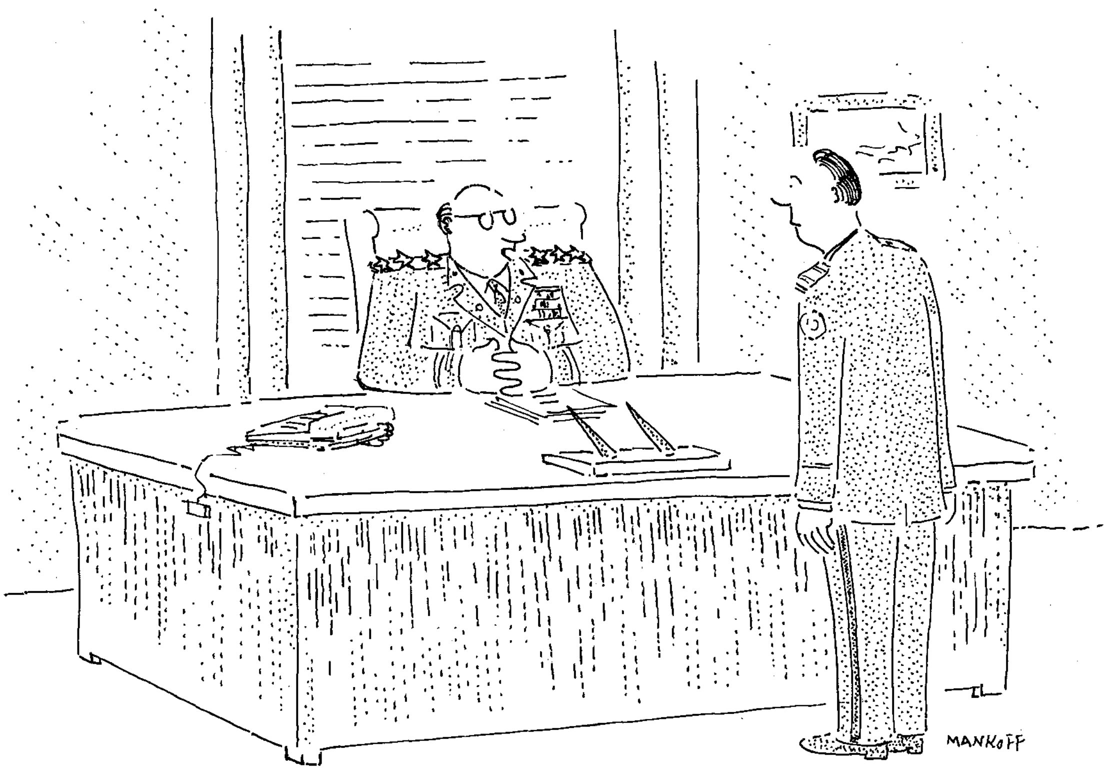
Moradian also says that people ran into his store to get off the street when the shooting started. He says he heard the shots; "I heard the bangs—they sounded like shots." He saw policemen approach, and saw transit policemen join them. The robbers split up. Four guys, only one gunman. Two ran toward Amsterdam and were caught. The gunman ran down Ninety-first toward Riverside Park and was killed. One eyewitness said the fourth man ran down Broadway and melted into the crowd; he had most of the money, over forty thousand dollars. One of the guys who were caught had twenty-one thousand dollars.

A man, who wants his anonymity, says that the gunman who was shot was big. "I saw him lying on the ground. He didn't have running shoes on." A man who works at the newsstand at Ninety-first and Broadway says, "I saw nuttin'." A woman says she was in the bank when the robbers entered, around ten o'clock. One vaulted the counter, which is slightly over four feet high, and began rifling the cash drawers. "He was some kinda athlete. I was scared. Nothing means anything to those people."

It seems probable that no alarm was sounded from inside the bank. The papers say a police car was flagged down; an eyewitness says the cops approached on foot. A corporate communications officer, Colleen Kelly, said, "We do not comment on bank robberies." She said no employee could talk about any aspect of the robbery.

Jay Pearsall owns Murder Ink, a book store in the next block, which specializes in murder mysteries. He was opening his store when the robbery occurred. He heard the shots, six or eight, he says, and looked out and saw four or five people running for safety and one woman sprinting and pushing a stroller with a baby in it around the corner of his block. Then he heard more shots, from the direction of Riverside Park.

He says it wasn't on the whole as upsetting as coming to the store early one morning to open up and catching sight of what he knew at once was drying blood, a lot of it, blackish and bluish-brown and stinking, spread over the sidewalk and splashed in a wide sweep across the front of his store and part of the metal gate. He learned



"One last question, pending the new regulations. If I were a carpenter and you were a lady, would you marry me anyway, would you have my baby?"

later that some guy's throat had been cut there, accidentally or suicidally or in a murder, the police weren't sure. "No one cleaned it up and that upset me. My girlfriend and I had to scrub it off the sidewalk and the walls and the gate." Jay is from California. His father was a policeman in the Bay Area for twenty-five years. "I don't feel intimidated. That isn't it," he said. "But this stuff bothers me. I think it's getting worse."

Across from an O.T.B. parlor and a bingo parlor, the bank is under observation all day long by men standing on the street in front of those places. Police, openly in patrol cars and perhaps working undercover in some of the stores—new faces—are staked out along Broadway all the time now. The prostitutes work the early-morning traffic at that corner. One of them said, "It's rough, man, and it's cold—that's all I got to say. You got a cigarette you don't want?"

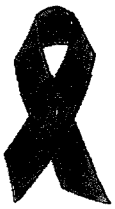
ANTICLIMAX

SEVERAL hundred people filled the auditorium of the Ninety-second Street Y on the night of the Super Bowl to consider the weighty question "Is sex politically correct?" Possibly some of them, having paid fifteen dollars apiece to attend, imagined that once the question had been speedily resolved in the affirmative they would divest themselves of their DKNY winter coats and engage in a celebratory bacchanal. If not, it was difficult to imagine why so many sat through to the end of such a low-key event, which had been billed as a "lecture" by a panel of *bien-pensant* liberals, among them Nicholson Baker, Gay Talese, and Christopher Cerf, one of the authors of the "Official Politically Correct Dictionary and Handbook." Erica Jong was the moderator, but she ended up having nothing to moderate, so uniform were the opinions of the panelists.

As hesitant speech followed hesitant speech, each one teetering between First Amendment fundamentalism and the best possible taste, one began to long for a spot of intolerance. A lightning raid on the Y by a flying column of Andrea Dworkins and Jesse Helmses might have jerked the audience out of its torpor. It might also have cheered up the novelist Nicholson Baker, who for most of the time—quite understandably under the circumstances—seemed to have lost his

THE RED RIBBON

LAST Monday, in a lavish ceremony at the New York State Theatre at Lincoln Center, the American fashion industry presented its annual awards. Included by the Council of Fashion Designers of America was a Special Award, for what has become the fashion accessory of the year. It was given to Visual AIDS, a collaborative of artists "devoted to increasing awareness and promoting action to end the social and health crisis—AIDS," the accessory, of course, being the loop of red grosgrain or silk ribbon fastened with a safety pin to the satin lapel of every tuxedo and to the front of every evening gown of anybody who's anybody at every awards ceremony worth its slot on prime time. This special accessory is meant to show solidarity with and compassion for those afflicted with AIDS. The man who accepted the award, who had the courage to stand onstage and tell a packed house he was living with AIDS, said he felt comforted by the fact that people wore red ribbons on the street. He said that a feeling of love was generated by these strangers—love and awareness.

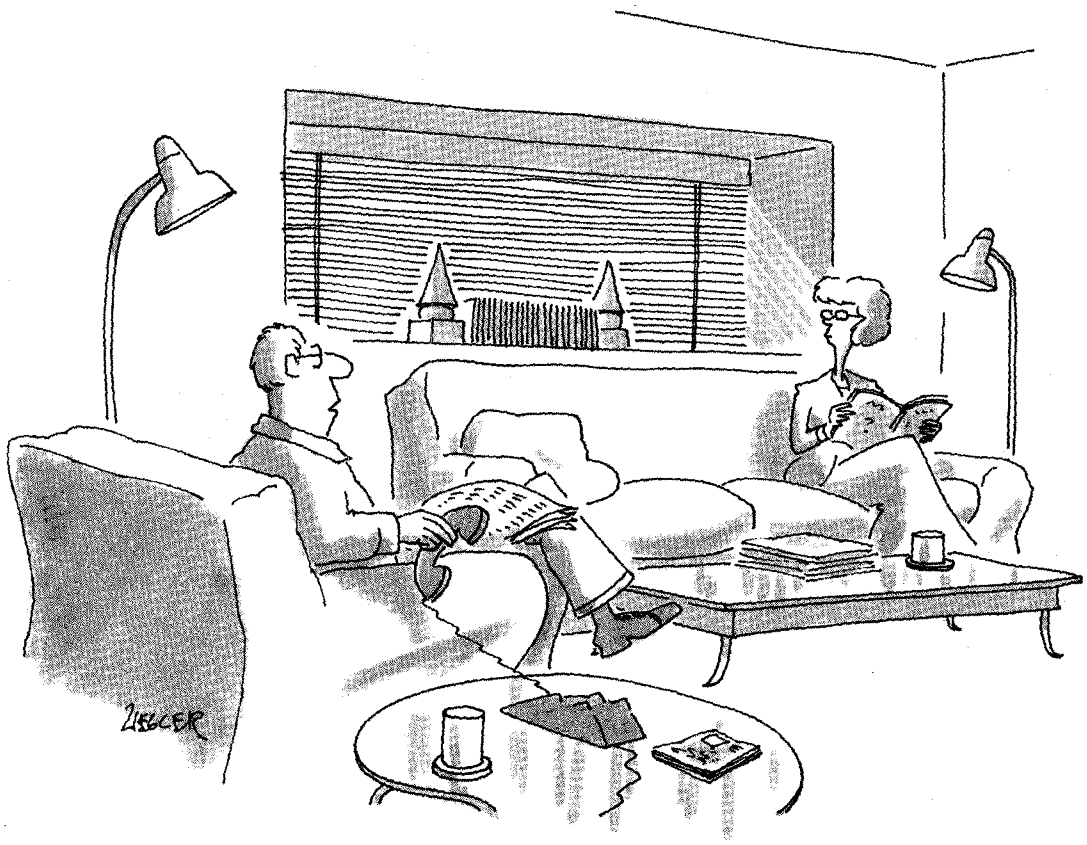


As a person with AIDS, I beg to differ. As I sat through that awards ceremony, I felt rage at the trivialization of this catastrophe into a Special Award at a glittering event full of red ribbons and gleaming white teeth. It's the same at every AmFAR benefit and every disease-of-the-week dinner: AIDS has become a red ribbon one can conveniently pin to a jacket, a dehumanized abstraction, a statistic on the evening news. Of course, one doesn't want to see horrifying images of what look like Auschwitz victims covered with Kaposi's-sarcoma lesions projected on a screen at a gala, but I am still waiting for someone in a wheelchair connected to an I.V. bottle, in the terminal stages of AIDS, to talk to a five-hundred-dollar-a-plate crowd about what it is to live with this condition every day. There is no letup, no relief; it is not a red ribbon.

Like the P.O.W. bracelets in the early seventies, and the yellow ribbons we heard about in songs and saw tied on trees, the little loop of grosgrain is our current prepackaged cause, convenient and accessible to everyone. When the award was given the other night, it was preceded by images, projected on a giant screen, of a dozen or so media celebrities, all wearing the ribbon, and themselves forming a patchwork loop. But nobody mentioned the extent of the pandemic: that the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta put the number of H.I.V.-infected persons in America conservatively at one million; that declared AIDS cases in this country had reached 242,146 by September of 1992; that the number of AIDS-related deaths here had by then exceeded 160,372. The World Health Organization estimates that there are thirteen million H.I.V.-infected persons worldwide, with a million newly infected people since mid-1992. It is not a red ribbon.

There are now several designer versions of the loop. One can buy them covered in rhinestones or garnets or in solid gold. There has even been one diamond-pavé ribbon, with no hint of red about it, which was sold, gratifyingly, to the highest bidder at an AIDS charity auction. That, of course, is the upside: the proceeds from the sale of the ribbons and brooches have made some financial contribution to AIDS care and research. But the more important function of the ribbon seems to be to alleviate guilt through trickle-down awareness, to make people feel comfortable without having to do anything. Never in history has so much schmalz been generated around an illness. The ribbon is becoming an epidemic in itself.

—DAVID SEIDNER



“That was Ross Perot. He wants me to send him fifteen dollars.”

• •

vox. Ms. Jong labored hard to arouse indignation at the hypocrisy implicit in the ubiquity of VCR pornography and the simultaneous removal from library shelves of works by such distinguished novelists as Henry Miller, James Joyce, and—er—Erica Jong. But, as Nicholson Baker observed, “no one really cares about books.”

Gay Talese, the most magisterial-looking of the panelists, offered several anecdotes about sexual mores in his notoriously puritanical home town, Ocean City, New Jersey, which he said was brimming over with decadence (“You can, at the corner drugstore, get all of the smut that you can in any large city of enlightenment”). But he was accorded the biggest guffaw of the evening for observing that, if the President’s opponents were to be believed, homosexuals were now scrabbling to get into the Army as though it were the New York Racquet Club.

There was a small spark of disagreement between Talese and Nadine Strossen, the head of the A.C.L.U. and a professor at the New York College of Law, about whether there should be any limits at all on the sexual content of art. Nicholson Baker also tried to stir things up a little by saying that absolute permissiveness made a writer’s work more difficult, because it left him without taboos to transgress. “Any writer’s books now just can’t get that kind of oomph from feeling that you’re doing something forbidden,” he said.

In the end, though, the panelists all agreed that the distinction between pornography and erotica—and hence the political correctness or incorrectness of sex itself—was in the eye of the beholder. Earlier, Christopher Cerf had pointed out that by inventing political correctness the left had given the right a handy stick with which to beat it. But, on the evidence of this discussion, the right need hardly bother to use the stick, as the left was doing the job for it—albeit in a very desultory manner.

CRAMPED JUSTICE

PART 18C of the Bronx Housing Court may well be the smallest courtroom in the land. “I think it’s the smallest courtroom in the world,” the Honorable Pierre Turner, who presides over Part 18C, said. “But I’ve never been to Calcutta.”

Part 18C—courtrooms in the New York State system are known as “parts”—is approximately fifteen feet square. Four people work full time in Part 18C—the court attorney (a lawyer who assists the judge), a court clerk (who keeps track of the paperwork), a court officer (who keeps the peace), and Judge Turner (whose bench is on a platform raised seven inches off the floor). On one wall are a sign that says “In God We Trust” and a large calendar from “V. Santini, Agent for Atlas Van Lines—Long Distance Moving.” The space is so snug that a piece of paper can be passed by hand from the clerk, who sits in one back corner, to the judge, from the judge to the litigants, and from them to the court attorney, who sits in the opposite front corner, without anyone’s having to get out of his chair.

Part 18C is one of nine small courtrooms that constitute the Housing Court in the basement of the Bronx County Building, made famous by “The Bonfire of the Vanities.” The Housing Court’s judges handle about ninety-three thousand cases a year, most involving disputes about rent and evictions.

The other day, four conversations were going on at once in Part 18C. The manager of an apartment building, accompanied by his lawyer, was testifying before Judge Turner about a squatter who refused to leave; the court attorney was trying to settle a case with a tenant and her lawyer; the court officer and the court clerk were discussing the next case; and another court officer—a visitor—was talking on the telephone. Thirty-five people, including seven children, were waiting in the corridor outside Part 18C for their cases to be called.

Under New York State guidelines,

courtrooms like Part 18C should be a minimum of six hundred square feet, and that is well over twice the size of Judge Turner's courtroom. Indeed, Part 18C fails virtually all of thirty-four separate standards for courtrooms. The room does, however, more than satisfy one of them: that a judge should be "heard and seen in all parts of the courtroom." "The guidelines are just guidelines," Mary deBourbon, the director of communications for New York's Unified Court System, said, "and we do the best we can."

CRADLE TO GRAVE

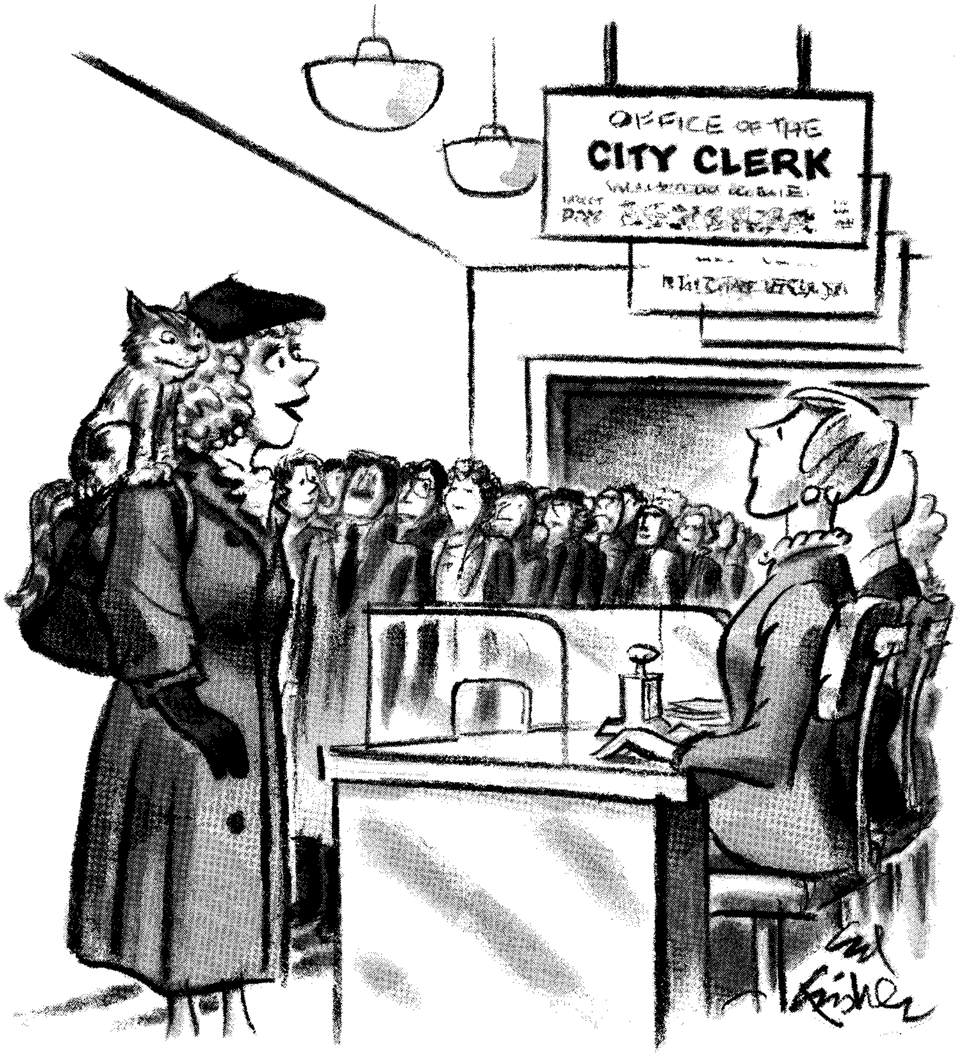
THE tenth edition of *The Yearbook of Experts, Authorities, & Spokespersons* (paper) hit the desks of seven thousand executives in recent months. A lot of the entries (maybe as many as half of them) are straightforwardly useful. Anybody looking for an expert, an authority, or a spokesperson from, say, the Girl Scouts of America or the C.I.A. won't be disappointed. At the same time, much of the *Yearbook* can make you feel like a viewer of daytime talk shows. Nearly all forms of modern societal dread and humiliation turn up again and again in its pages: insomnia, drug addiction, incest, other sex, suicide. (Yes, Sally Jessy has a copy of the book.) Unless you are a grand government agency, like the C.I.A., you have to pay seven hundred and seventy-five dollars for a full-page ad in the *Yearbook*, which is laid out something like the yellow pages, according to subject.

Many of the experts have provided reassuring photographs of themselves. Dianne Hales, for instance, of the Better Sleep Council, a moon-faced brunette wearing a negligée and a single strand of pearls, is pictured cuddled up on a bare mattress in a room full of mattresses. Ms. Hales is eager to tell the public about "how bedding affects nearly every aspect of life."

There is an overload of experts on children. "More children die playing baseball than in any other sport," a reader learns from the ad of Jess Heald ("B.S., Master's in Aerospace Engineering, Youth Baseball Safety Expert.") Mr. Heald, whose photograph might not be comforting to a parent—his eyes are a bit too bright—offers to conduct a "dramatic demonstration in which baseballs are fired at a human head model at sixty miles per hour" to prove his point. Then, there's Jerry Johnston. "THIS MAN KNOWS KIDS," his ad says. Mr. Johnston also knows about "Suicide, Teen Sex, AIDS, Satanism, Alcohol." And he's written books about all those things, too—"The Edge of Evil," "Killing Our Kids," "Why Suicide?," and "Going All the Way." Shelly Marshall, a woman whose topic is adolescent-addiction recovery, wears white eye shadow in her photograph but otherwise looks natural and trustworthy. She is unashamed of her credentials: "Clean and sober since twenty-one . . . the daughter of an alcoholic, an alcoholic/addict herself, and the mother of an alcoholic teenager."

For adult dilemmas, there's the Phobia Institute of West Los Angeles (specializing in holiday trauma). And there's a Telephone Doctor, in St. Louis, whose slogan is "What Doctor Ruth does for the bedroom the Telephone Doctor does for the phone." The Telephone Doctor—an authority on call-waiting rudeness and other telephone disorders—is cheerful, blond Nancy Friedman. In her ad, she wears a white coat and holds a black cordless telephone to her ear.

Marilee C. Goldberg, M.S.W., Ph.D., is a super-expert; she has two ads in the *Yearbook*. In one of them, as the representative of something she calls Clarion Communications, Dr. Goldberg maintains that people can "enjoy more success, wealth, love, and power simply by asking the right questions." The entry says, "New research shows failure springs from asking the wrong questions. Winners ask *different kinds of questions*." Dr. Goldberg's second ad is for herself, as a Washington, D.C., psychotherapist. It reads, "What can you do to get over your mother and get on with your life?" This could be one of the right questions. As for answers, she promises to reveal "what to do if your mother runs your life from her grave." ♦



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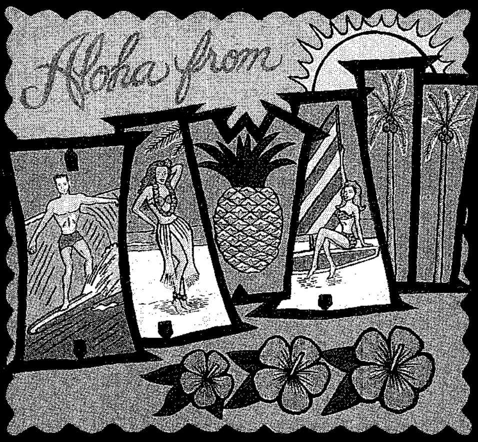
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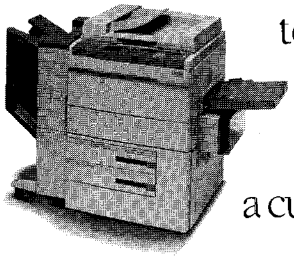

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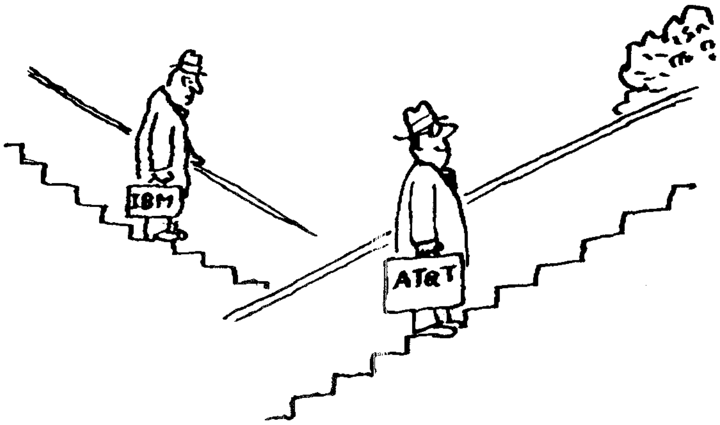
THE WORLD OF BUSINESS

WHALES AND SHARKS

The unexpected fates of I.B.M. and A.T. & T. may offer a lesson to the Clinton Justice Department.

BY JAMES B. STEWART

AT one point during the Justice Department's massive antitrust case against I.B.M., Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, the company's general counsel and a former Attorney General under President Lyndon Johnson, arrived in Washington for a meeting with a little-known Justice Department economist, Alan McAdams, and his colleagues. The case would go down in history as, in the words of Robert Bork, the antitrust division's Vietnam—but at that juncture, in the nineteen-seventies, there were still people who thought the case might be settled, and the government had yet to specify just what relief it was seeking. From the beginning, the Justice Department had said that it wanted to see "divestitures," meaning a breaking off of some parts of I.B.M., but beyond that the approach had been deliberately left vague. McAdams' views of what should happen to I.B.M. had evolved over several years, after numerous discussions with other Justice Department economists and with the government's Council of Economic Advisers, and they had become progressively more radical.



ANDRZEJ CZECZOT

To maintain secrecy, the two sides met in an out-of-the-way file room in an office building near the Justice Department that had been reserved expressly for the I.B.M. litigation. Katzenbach was informed that, in order to introduce competition into the computer industry, the government would settle for nothing less than the wholesale dismemberment of I.B.M. The government felt so strongly about this point, Katzenbach was told, that it was non-negotiable. Katzenbach, McAdams recalls, turned pale with anger and vowed that I.B.M. would never be broken up. Katzenbach himself says that it would have been out of character for him to show any emotion, but he recalls such a meeting and his reaction to the demand for divestiture: "It was silly. They didn't know what they were talking about. Of course we were strongly opposed."

Perhaps the only prospect that was more unthinkable than the breakup of Big Blue, as I.B.M. was affectionately known, was the dismemberment of another icon of American business, the American Telephone & Telegraph Company. In November of 1974, when Attorney General William Saxbe announced that the government was suing to break up the phone company, the reaction was as hostile as it was at I.B.M. A.T. & T.'s chairman, John deButts, publicly characterized the suit as a national catastrophe. He told Howard Trienens, a partner at Sidley & Austin in Chicago, who would become A.T. & T.'s general counsel and lead the company's defense, that A.T. & T. would "fight to the death." Within the phone company, it had always been gospel that a fully integrated telephone system, including phones, wires, and equipment manufacture and research at the renowned Bell Labs, was the efficient way to deliver a national communications system—a "natural monopoly," if ever there was one. "The culture of the Bell System was such that the idea of

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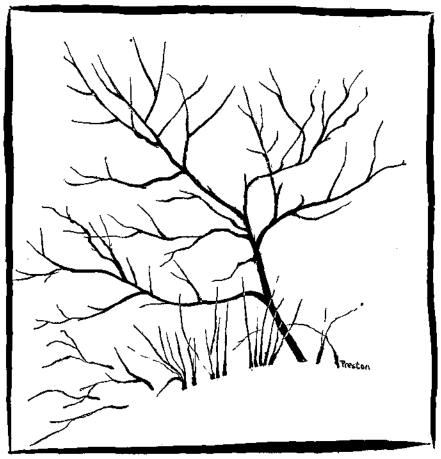
breaking up the network couldn't even be contemplated," Trienens recalls. Nevertheless, one afternoon during the summer of 1980, with the A.T. & T. case six years old, Trienens began to wonder. Two clients of Sidley & Austin were natural-gas-pipeline companies. Like A.T. & T., they owned competitive businesses (the pipelines) and regulated monopolies (local distribution). They wanted to separate these businesses so that the competitive parts would be free from meddling by utility regulators. In effect, they wanted to break themselves up. Why, Trienens wondered, was he sitting in New York fighting the government to preserve a monopoly for A.T. & T. when his other clients wanted to get rid of theirs? Trienens took this argument back to Charles E. Brown, deButts' successor as chairman, who was hardly thrilled by such heresy. The phone company was part of the backbone of America. Still, as Peter Temin wrote in his 1987 book, "The Fall of the Bell System," Brown presented Trienens' idea to his board of directors. They rejected it. But the idea was no longer unthinkable, and A.T. & T.'s planners began to analyze the consequences of breaking up what was then the world's largest company.

Events in the I.B.M. and A.T. & T. cases, the largest antitrust cases in living memory, reached their climax on January 8, 1982, a day the *Times* called "the end of an era in antitrust law." The Reagan Justice Department announced that it was abandoning the I.B.M. case but that A.T. & T. had capitulated, and had agreed to divest itself of all its regional Bell operating companies. The decision was hailed as an unqualified victory for I.B.M. In legal terms, it undoubtedly was a victory. I.B.M. lawyers and executives who had toiled on the case celebrated all night at Regine's. There were no celebrations at A.T. & T.'s headquarters. The settlement was viewed as disastrous, not just by the company but by Ronald Reagan himself and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger. Both of them had opposed the breakup on national-security grounds, among others. Though Trienens attempted to reassure Chairman Brown, he greeted the decision with grim resignation, issuing a brief statement that "our obligation is to conform to national policy, not make it." The two decisions did indeed mark the end of an era for national antitrust policy. No monopolization cases have been filed since that day.

LAST month, on January 19th, I.B.M. reported a quarterly loss of $5.46 billion, the largest in American business history, and I.B.M.'s first quarterly loss from regular operations. After seventy years of steady increases, the company drastically reduced its dividend. Over the past year, shareholders have lost twenty-seven billion dollars. I.B.M.'s only chance to recover may be to accelerate, of all things, the process of breaking itself up into smaller operating units.

On January 28th, four days after I.B.M.'s announcement, A.T. & T. reported record quarterly earnings of a billion dollars and a yearly profit of $3.8 billion on sales of $65 billion. Its ebullient chairman, Robert E. Allen, hailed the results as a "banner year." More important, A.T. & T. has been competing aggressively in a host of new endeavors. It recently agreed to acquire a controlling interest in McCaw Cellular Communications, the largest wireless telephone carrier, which will bring it, for the first time, into direct competition with its offspring, the Bell operating companies, and give it a major presence in the fast-growing cellular industry. In 1991, it spent $7.5 billion to buy the computer-maker NCR Corporation, and last year it won two Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards, one for the performance of a division of its Network Systems Group, and the other for its hugely successful introduction of the Universal credit card. Robert Morris, a telecommunications analyst at Goldman, Sachs, predicts that A.T. & T. will be "an awesome multimedia communications giant by the turn of the century."



But perhaps nothing better illustrates the diverging fates of A.T. & T. and I.B.M. than their stock prices. When the stock market closed on January 7, 1982, the eve of the settlements, the share price at both I.B.M. and A.T. & T. was just under sixty dollars. Exactly eleven years later, a hundred shares of I.B.M. were worth $4,700, a decline of seventeen per cent. A hundred shares of A.T. & T., plus the stock of the Baby Bells that shareholders received as a result of the divestiture, were worth $18,784, an increase of two hundred and twenty-two per cent. Dividends further widen the gap: over that time, a hundred I.B.M. shares paid $4,810 in dividends; A.T. & T. paid $7,117. The total return on the hundred shares purchased in 1982: $9,510 for I.B.M., $25,901 for A.T. & T.

"We were forced by the divestiture to make changes that probably were good for us," Robert Allen says. "We went through some tough years, but it paid off. We may have been more fortunate than I.B.M. in that change was forced on us."

John H. Shenefield was President Jimmy Carter's Assistant Attorney General in charge of antitrust from 1977 to 1979, and he presided over both the A.T. & T. and the I.B.M. cases. He is now a partner at the Washington office of the law firm of Morgan, Lewis & Bockius. Like nearly everyone else who advocated the breakup of I.B.M. or embraced an active antitrust-enforcement policy, he was all but forgotten amid the deregulatory zeal of the eighties. "The question will always be whether the world of computers would look different today," Shenefield says when he is asked about I.B.M.'s 1982 victory. "Would I.B.M. have been like A.T. & T. and the Baby Bells? Would it be more vibrant? Would it have had to adapt to a competitive mode? Big Blue was an object of veneration in those years. It was very hard to persuade people to do anything even remotely adversarial toward it. It had an aura of excellence. But if I.B.M. had gone through the divestiture it would have had to develop new entrepreneurial opportunities. With real competition, who knows what imagination and creativity that process might have invited? Competition theorists think the industry as a whole would have been better off if I.B.M. had been broken up, and if it would have been better for the public I think it would have been better for the shareholders, too."

BOTH the I.B.M. and the A.T. & T. cases were filed under Section 2 of the Sherman Antitrust Act, the landmark nineteenth-century legislation aimed at breaking up the corporate trusts of the robber barons. Section 1 of the Sherman Act outlaws alliances resulting in the restraint of trade, such as price-fixing conspiracies; Section 2 outlaws "acts and practices" of "monopolization," where a single company becomes oppressively dominant. Section 2 cases have been relatively rare, but they have had broad and enduring consequences. Among the most famous and successful, of course, were the Standard Oil case, which broke up the Rockefeller monopoly and shaped the modern oil industry, and the American Tobacco case, which broke up the tobacco monopoly. Such cases have as their goal the restoration of competition in industries that have come under the sway of monopolists, and thus the government typically seeks to create new competitors, usually by carving them out of the existing monopolist.

Many observers believe that I.B.M. was on the brink of losing its case in court when it was rescued by the government's decision to drop the case. After thirteen years, the trial under way in Manhattan federal court was nearly over: all the evidence was in. The presiding judge, David Edelstein, seemed perturbed by the government's decision. Today, he says that he hadn't yet decided how he would rule, and that he can't comment on the merits of the suit, because he is still technically presiding over it. He offers these thoughts: "It appears, in the entire history of antitrust law, going back to the earliest times, that when enforcement proceeds and a monopolist is broken up the parts grow stronger than the whole. They are able to survive and flourish, instead of being part of an albatross."

Nearly everyone in the computer industry agrees that, following its antitrust victory, I.B.M. complacently retreated into the mainframe world it dominated—a strategy that was rewarding in the short term but has now proved disastrous. Mainframes are the huge high-

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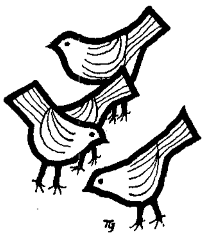
power computers that I.B.M.'s sales force first leased and then sold to major business customers. In part to preserve I.B.M.'s dominance, the company deliberately made its minicomputers and other small-scale lines incompatible with its mainframes, forcing users of the smaller machines to trade up to mainframes instead of simply linking them or connecting them to a central mainframe. For years, the strategy seemed to work, propping up I.B.M. profits and revenues.

While I.B.M. poured millions of dollars in research into mainframes (surely a waste of its research capabilities), the operating system that was destined to become the basis of personal computers, known as DOS (it was originally called QDOS, meaning "quick and dirty operating system"), was controlled by the fledgling software manufacturer Microsoft, which licensed it to I.B.M. Microprocessor-chip technology, in turn, was ceded to Intel. The two companies soon ran away with the business, innovating to the point where the combination of Intel's tiny but powerful chips and Microsoft's software turned the bulky mainframes into the technological equivalent of the brontosaurus. The computer industry was transformed by P.C. "clones" and work stations. Others certainly saw what was coming. In 1988, the money manager and columnist James J. Cramer wrote of a "revolution" in computer technology, a "revolution that will finally take its toll with the unravelling of I.B.M. as we know it, as I.B.M.'s whole product line and pricing structure will be challenged." Amazingly, I.B.M. itself never seemed to notice.



The company's executives continued to behave like virtual caricatures of organization men, with their white shirts, gray suits, and organization-babble (such as "M.I.A.," or "management-initiated attrition," to mean "fired": an abbreviation in frequent use these days). As Paul B. Carroll noted in the *Wall Street Journal* recently, I.B.M. executives depended so heavily on presentations using projectors and transparencies, known as "foils," that many had projectors built into the tops of their rosewood desks. "He's good with foils" was deemed a high compliment.

The burden of I.B.M.'s mistakes fell on John Akers, the chairman, who finally had to resign last month. Akers, who is fifty-eight, had spent his entire career at I.B.M., joining the company as a salesman in Vermont after graduating from Yale and serving as a Navy carrier pilot. Lean and ruddy-complexioned, he exuded the confidence that made I.B.M. salesmen legendary in their heyday, and was named chairman in 1986. In recent years, as problems mounted, he did try to change things, relaxing the company's many strict rules (a process called by employees "glasnost") and trying to foster internal competition. Yet he was probably too steeped in I.B.M.'s traditions. It was only recently that he could bring himself to depart from I.B.M.'s historic no-layoffs policy, a move that was long overdue. A spokesman for I.B.M. says that Akers has no comment on his tenure, and "has no thoughts whatsoever" on whether I.B.M. might have been better off had it lost the antitrust case. Katzenbach, who remained on I.B.M.'s board until last year, says that any suggestion that I.B.M. might have been better off "is naïve speculation." He adds, "I suppose the effect would have been to turn the hardware business over to the Japanese."

Alan McAdams, who fought so long to break up I.B.M., is now at Cornell, teaching courses in industrial policy and economics. By the end of the antitrust case, his relations with I.B.M. people were strained ("I hear they used to go into rages at the mere mention of my name," he says), and, while he isn't happy about I.B.M.'s plight, he is not mourning it. He says he is "flabbergasted" at how "inept" the company has been, and he goes on, "I.B.M. never learned how to compete. If we'd broken them up, holy smoke, they would have had to learn how to compete right away. It would have been an immediate wake-up call. They were great as a monopolist, but monopolist skills don't seem very transferable to a competitive situation. They loved incompatibility; it gave them an installed base that wasn't subject to attack by a competitor. Now customers are *demanding* compatibility, through networking and software, and they're getting it, though not from I.B.M."

McAdams wanted to break I.B.M. into at least four competitors, all of which would be "vertically integrated"; that is, they would compete across the whole line of I.B.M. products, from software and minicomputers to mainframes. "There would have been an initial heavily competitive situation," he says. "Each of the new I.B.M.s would have had the same product line. They'd have competed for customers like crazy. There would have been a phenomenal impact on prices. That really scared them. But when there's heavy pressure, as there would have been, that's when you get startling innovation."

THE A.T. & T. case was the brainchild of a former antitrust-division chief, Thomas Kauper, who is now a professor at the University of Michigan Law School. It was filed in 1974, during the Ford Administration and shortly after the trauma of the Watergate scandal, and it seemed to take on a life of its own. As early as 1981, President Reagan, Defense Secretary Weinberger, and Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige were all on record as opposing the case. It survived only through the intervention of Reagan's chief of staff, James A. Baker, who feared that dropping it could trigger a political backlash on the order of the I.T.T. / Dita Beard scandal. (Beard was the lobbyist who, in 1972, allegedly helped arrange the settlement of I.T.T.'s antitrust case in exchange for various favors for the Republican Party.) According to Trienens, William F. Baxter, Reagan's new head of the antitrust division, told him, "They're all scared of another Dita Beard. They can't stop my lawsuit."

It took A.T. & T. years to realize that it wasn't going to be rescued by either the White House or Congress (where then Representative Timothy Wirth horrified the phone company by turning the case into a populist crusade), and as the trial continued it became obvious that the company was going to lose. At one point, the presiding judge, Harold H. Greene, stated flatly that the government's evidence demonstrated that "the Bell system has violated the antitrust laws in a number of ways over a lengthy period of time." A.T. & T. was forced into a consent decree, simply because that seemed the lesser of two evils. "Without government intervention, they could never have cut themselves apart," Trienens says. "They would never have tackled these matters."

Under the consent decree, A.T. & T. was divided into seven regional companies (NYNEX, Bell Atlantic, BellSouth, Ameritech, US West, Southwestern Bell, and Pacific Telesis) and the former parent company, which kept Bell Labs and its manufacturing subsidiary, Western Electric. In return, A.T. & T. was released from most of the onerous restrictions under which it had operated, including limits on its entry into other businesses, such as computers. A.T. & T. shareholders received one share of each company for every ten shares of the "old" A.T. & T., and they continued to own the old shares. The transaction was incredibly complicated. "At first, the company said, 'We can't do it,' " Trienens says. "I said, 'We can't sit on the operating table for two years. You have to do it.' " The task was finished in 1984, when the new companies' shares began trading on the New York Stock Exchange. The regional companies, the Baby Bells, retained their local monopolies and quickly adapted to an environment that wasn't really very different from the one they had known. (They were no longer part of the staid culture of the old A.T. & T., however, and some of them acted like teen-agers suddenly released from a curfew; NYNEX, for example, got into trouble with regulators for throwing lavish call-girl parties for suppliers.)

A.T. & T. couldn't retreat into the traditional mainstay of its revenues—long-distance service—the way I.B.M. retreated into mainframes; newly aggressive competitors, in particular MCI and Sprint, were freed by the consent decree, and they ate steadily into A.T. & T.'s market share and profit margins. After several years of hesitation, the retirement of Brown, and the death of his successor, James Olson, Robert Allen became A.T. & T.'s chairman and, unlike Akers, began to move forcefully to shake up the remnants of monopoly culture. On the surface, he and Akers have much in common: they're the same age, fit, and conventionally good-looking. Allen, too, had spent his entire career at just one company (he turned down a job offer from I.B.M.), working his way up from Indiana Bell after graduating from Wabash College. But Allen had been on the divestiture task force and, as head of A.T. & T.'s information-services division, he had eliminated twenty-five thousand jobs. Since becoming chairman, in 1988, he has taken more dramatic steps: lowering prices, learning to market A.T. & T.'s products, cutting the work force in the traditional businesses, and spending heavily to upgrade technology. As recently as 1991, A.T. & T. had to take a $4.5-billion charge against earnings to cover the costs of its transformation.

"A.T. & T. had a miserable few years," Trienens says. "Pro-forma earnings projections for 1983 weren't hit until 1988 or '89. They lost their comfortable world. There was no way of predicting things, while with the nice monopoly there had almost never been any surprises. We'd owned all the telephones; they were all leased. Now people could buy them. Who knew how many would? The A.T. & T. people were upset. They had no projections. They couldn't do a business plan."

For consumers, the changes were revolutionary. Choices proliferated. A.T. & T. had long argued that consumers didn't want or need such choices—that choices would only confuse them. But, as in so many instances of misguided noblesse oblige, most consumers loved their new freedom. It no longer made sense to rent the phone equipment offered by Ma Bell, which considered the Princess model adventurous. Instead, people bought cordless phones, rubberized phones, easy-to-hold phones, novelty phones. They bought home answering machines, faxes, computer modems. They shopped for long-distance service at lower prices than ever before. (Of course, A.T. & T.'s monopolistic pricing in long distance had been used for decades to subsidize local service, and those prices have risen sharply.)

One startling aspect of A.T. & T.'s transformation is that it hasn't proved to be an innovative competitor in its old monopoly businesses. MCI, for example, has been extremely successful with its new "Friends & Family" low-cost long-distance service. A.T. & T., in its recent record-breaking-earnings quarter, reported that revenues from its long-distance business were actually down one per cent. At the same time, income from its NCR computer subsid-

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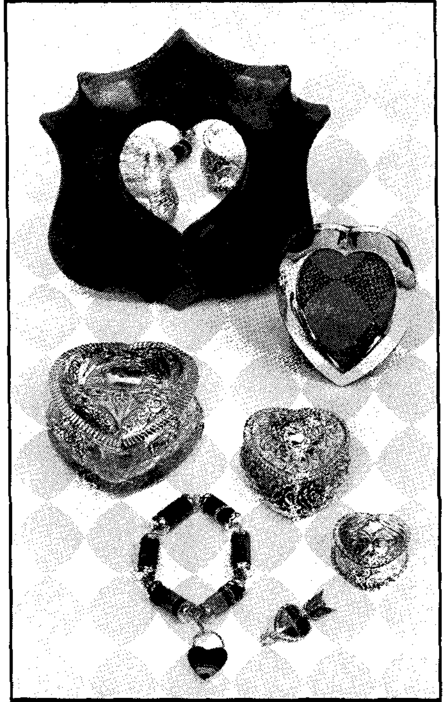

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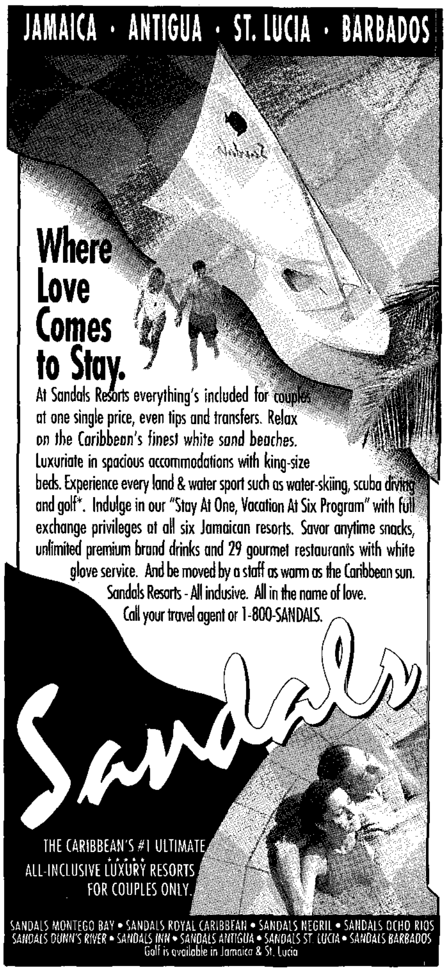
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iary was up twenty-four per cent—in the very arena that had once been dominated by I.B.M.

More than anyone else, William F. Baxter, who took over as head of the Justice Department's antitrust division in 1981, is credited with the revolution in antitrust enforcement brought on by the Reagan Administration. He is far better remembered for dropping the I.B.M. case than he is for breaking up A.T. & T.—probably because the I.B.M. action mirrored the Administration's deregulatory ideology. Baxter, who left the Justice Department in 1983 and now teaches antitrust at Stanford Law School, takes issue with his laissez-faire reputation. "In some ways, I did turn away from antitrust enforcement," he says. "But what I turned away from was populist intervention to protect competitors. The flip side of that was a determination to make the competitive process more vigorous." Indeed, he feels that at least one of his successors—a "very rigid, narrow, Chicago-school-economics" type—was far too tolerant of monopoly practices.

It was Baxter who pushed through the A.T. & T. settlement, over strong Reagan opposition. "I told the Attorney General"—William French Smith—"when I came that I intended to do the right thing on every case, and that that would ruffle feathers," he says. "If he didn't want that, he shouldn't appoint me." Smith himself was disqualified from ruling on both I.B.M. and A.T. & T., because his former law firm, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher, had done work for both companies. "Everybody was ticked off by my decision," Baxter recalls. "Weinberger didn't understand the case; all he knew was that A.T. & T. had been a golden goose for the Defense Department. He hadn't done his homework. Malcolm Baldrige was against it. He thought A.T. & T. was such a good company. He was a very superficial man."

Baxter seems almost gleeful at the results of the A.T. & T. breakup. "The phone industry has improved dramatically," he points out. "The Baby Bells' market capitalization has more than doubled. It was an amazing experiment in microeconomic theory, and it worked like gangbusters."

As for I.B.M., Baxter believes that as far as the public is concerned he reached the right decision in dropping the case: "I.B.M.'s behavior was very aggressive, but did it cross a prohibited boundary? I.B.M.'s conduct was maybe in a gray area, but it wasn't prohibited. Had I been able to think of a remedy that would have made the industry perform better, I might have come out differently." Baxter emphasizes that there was at least one fundamental difference between the two companies: A.T. & T. had a regulated monopoly in telephones, bestowed by the government, whereas I.B.M.'s monopoly position in mainframes was neither regulated nor conferred by law. Baxter says he recognized at the time that "the big mainframe approach—the source of I.B.M.'s market power—was an endangered species. I never discussed it with them, but I had every indication that they were aware of growing alternative markets. But then they kept riding the horse where they had a huge market share."

The activist antitrust policy of the seventies that culminated in the I.B.M. and A.T. & T. settlements is probably the closest thing the United States has ever had to an industrial policy. While at times it seemed to embrace the populist notion that "big is bad," at heart it reflected an almost romantic—critics said naïve—belief that competition benefitted society, consumers and shareholders alike. After twelve years of neglect under the sway of figures like former Attorney General Edwin Meese, monopolist antitrust policy seems almost certain to be reëvaluated by the Clinton Administration. Robert Pitofsky, who teaches at Georgetown University Law Center and was President Clinton's transition adviser on antitrust policy, says, "Anyone would expect that antitrust enforcement in this Administration will be more stringent and lively." Another transition official, Peter Edelman, also a professor at Georgetown, confirms that "we made recommendations for a stronger antitrust-enforcement policy that were favorably received" at the White House. President Clinton "has a much stronger pro-competitive approach" than did Presidents Reagan and Bush, he says. Pitofsky also notes, "It's true generally that where the whales are broken up into sharks the shareholders have thrived." Baxter himself expects more enforcement. "Was there too much antitrust retrenchment? I think so," he says, adding that the new Administration "will try to be activist." Trienens agrees, saying, "I expect to see much more antitrust enforcement than there's been in the last twelve years, but I don't see any visibly anti-business attitude—no 'Let's break up Exxon' kind of thing." Indeed, no one expects new cases to mirror those of the past. With global competition intensifying in many industries, it's myopic to look only at a company's dominance in the United States. With the speed of change in both markets and technology, cases cannot be allowed to drag on for thirteen years, as the I.B.M. litigation did; in fact, a key reason that A.T. & T. agreed to settle was the speed and pressure generated by Judge Greene. And everyone maintains that the antitrust power should be wielded cautiously, so as not to punish mere corporate success. Pitofsky says that he doesn't expect "a lot of the big Section 2 monopoly cases," in part because global competition has eroded the number of monopolists in this country.

Even so, there is no shortage of candidates for Justice Department scrutiny. At the top of nearly every list is Microsoft, the phenomenally successful software concern. Microsoft makes not only DOS but also the software programs (such as the ubiquitous Windows) that are used in personal computers. By some measures, it controls ninety per cent of the market for personal-computer operating-system software. Microsoft is already the subject of an investigation by the Federal Trade Commission into allegedly anti-competitive sales and marketing practices. "Microsoft is the new monopolist," McAdams says flatly. "Microsoft is engaging in many of the same practices that I.B.M. did." The F.T.C. appears to be examining the steep discounts Microsoft offers P.C. manufacturers who obtain Microsoft's DOS operating system by paying a royalty that covers all the machines they ship, whether or not those machines actually use DOS. Once a manufacturer pays the royalty, installing DOS in additional machines costs nothing and lowers the average cost of each DOS system. Thus, even though manufacturers are theoretically free to install competing operating systems, it makes little financial sense to do so, and few have. Microsoft has denied any wrongdoing; neither the company nor Wall Street seems to be taking the case very seriously.

As for parallels to the A.T. & T. case, the closest are the many large electrical utilities—Consolidated Edison, in New York, for instance—which both generate and distribute electricity. The local distribution system is a regulated monopoly, but there's no reason that others can't compete to supply electricity to municipalities. For that matter, one can argue that the utilities' costly forays into nuclear power can be traced to the arrogance of monopolists.

Nor are such examples confined to the United States. Japan, whose industries were so often cited during the eighties as proof that the United States needed its own giant monopolies in order to compete globally, is now discovering the long-term effects of an industrial policy that, in essence, created and then supported monopolists. Many of Japan's industries, from semiconductors to automobiles to consumer electronics, engaged in classic anti-competitive behavior, such as predatory pricing, to gain market dominance. Then they exploited it, reaping the enormous profits that only monopolists can extract. Yet today the Japanese economy is reeling. Like I.B.M., many of its leading industries grew complacent and failed to innovate. Industries once all but ceded to the Japanese are being reinvented by Americans, from advanced microchips to high-definition television.

Perhaps the seeds of self-destruction lie within all monopolies. If so, why should society pay the costs—in higher prices, misguided research, lack of innovation, and poor-quality products—while waiting for competition to reëmerge? One can imagine the cries of protest that will greet any new antitrust enforcement actions, much as happened with the actions against I.B.M. and A.T. & T. But as John Shenefield, the shepherd of such actions in the Carter years, notes, not without pride, the activist approach has been vindicated. "History has now proclaimed a verdict," he says. ♦

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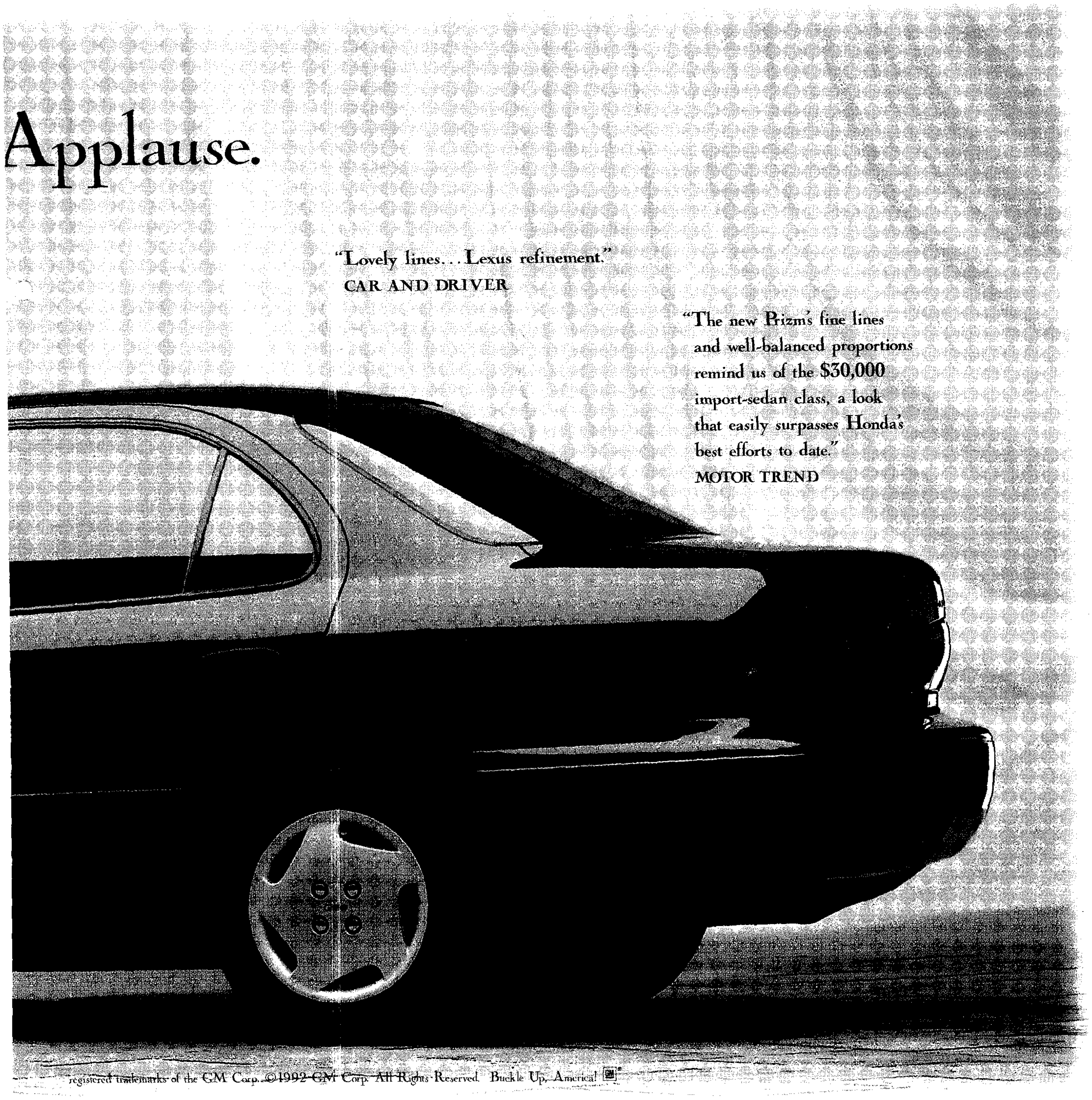

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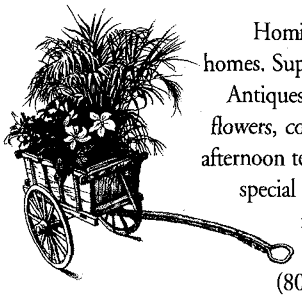

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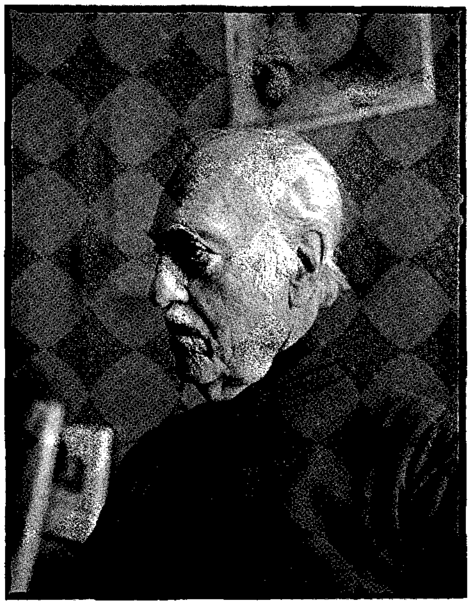


Esteban Vicente

KEN SCHLES

ESTEBAN VICENTE arrived into the world in Turégano, Spain, in 1903. In 1921, he arrived at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid. He arrived in Paris in 1929, and in 1936 he arrived in New York City. His reputation arrived somewhat later. In 1950, Clement Greenberg and Meyer Schapiro included him in their “New Talents 1950” show at the Kootz Gallery. The following year, he participated in the “9th Street” show—a defining moment for the first generation of New York Abstract Expressionists.

The other day, he arrived at his ninetieth birthday, and for the occasion the Berry-Hill Galleries mounted a show, “Esteban Vicente at 90: Five Decades of Work.” For more than two hours, Vicente stood amid the crush of the opening-reception crowd and greeted people, making jokes and answering questions. The opening and his birthday happened to fall on Inauguration Day, and cries of “Happy Birthday!” kept interrupting the ordinary art-party hum, giving the event a celebratory zing. A few unkempt young men with paint-splattered clothes and charcoal-smudged faces moved through the well-dressed crowd, looking like extras from a production of “Bleak House.” Eventually, they congregated around Vicente and were identified as his students from the New York Studio School.

“So shall we give you a critique of *your* work now?” one said.

“Sure,” he replied cheerfully. “But please don't flatter me.”

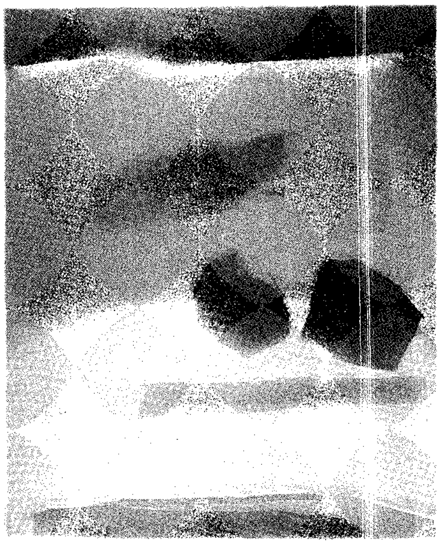
Several days later, I visited Vicente in his studio on West Forty-second Street, to which he commutes every day from an apartment, on the Upper West Side, that he shares with his wife, Harriet. “I paint to paint, not to have shows,” he said. “I paint every day—there is no way to avoid it. If you don't paint you do nothing. You die.”

The studio is spacious and light-filled. It contains several captain's chairs and a bookshelf lined with books about Japan and Tibet. Mostly, though, there are paintings, stacked in orderly racks or haphazardly leaning, front forward, against the walls. Some are so new that the staples gleam, while others are older, darker, and covered with dust. Vicente has a thin white mustache and fine silver hair, which he neatly combs back. There is a pensive severity to his handsome appearance. At times his face is like a mask. Even at ninety, he moves gracefully; he is one of those figures for whom clothes seem to be made. Away from the studio, he wears stylish but subdued suits, some of a red-clay color, and others of a muted gray-blue. He is lithe and relaxed, and yet beneath this there is something taut and coiled, like the insides of a watch. Vicente also conveys that sense of mystery possessed by individuals who reach a great age and yet continue to pursue their vocations with vigor, perhaps even increased vigor. The phenomenon may be particularly noticeable among artists, because to the rest of us the compulsions and rewards of making art always feel slightly out of view, ethereal, and unreasonable.

“What is painting?” Vicente said during my visit. “No one can explain painting. My paintings talk, and I don’t have anything to say. I’m still trying to find out what painting is, and the only way to do that is to be alone. The loneliness has to do with what you do.”

If Vicente’s paintings speak to us, they may be saying that he is doing the strongest work of his career just now. The earliest work in the show, a collage dating from 1950, is full of jagged edges colliding with one another, and is a bit reminiscent of the work of Willem de Kooning, with whom he once shared a studio. Gradually, the paintings moved away from this angular, near-Cubist sensibility. At times his paintings fuse the shapes of Mark Rothko with the colors of Matisse. His most recent work reincorporates some of the dissonant shapes of his earlier work into rich, almost dreamy planes of color, but they are used sparingly, like jazzy accents.

The Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim, and the Whitney all own Vicente paintings but rarely show them. When I asked Vicente if he paid attention to the fashions of the art world, his lean face took on an almost beneficent glow. “You have to deal with imbeciles, but you have to be free of that,” he said. “Fashion is today, art is tomorrow. Like every human being, I want to be loved, but I want to be loved on my own terms. No one told me to be a painter—it’s my responsibility. Artists have purpose in life, but you must make the effort. Through effort you have joy.” ♦



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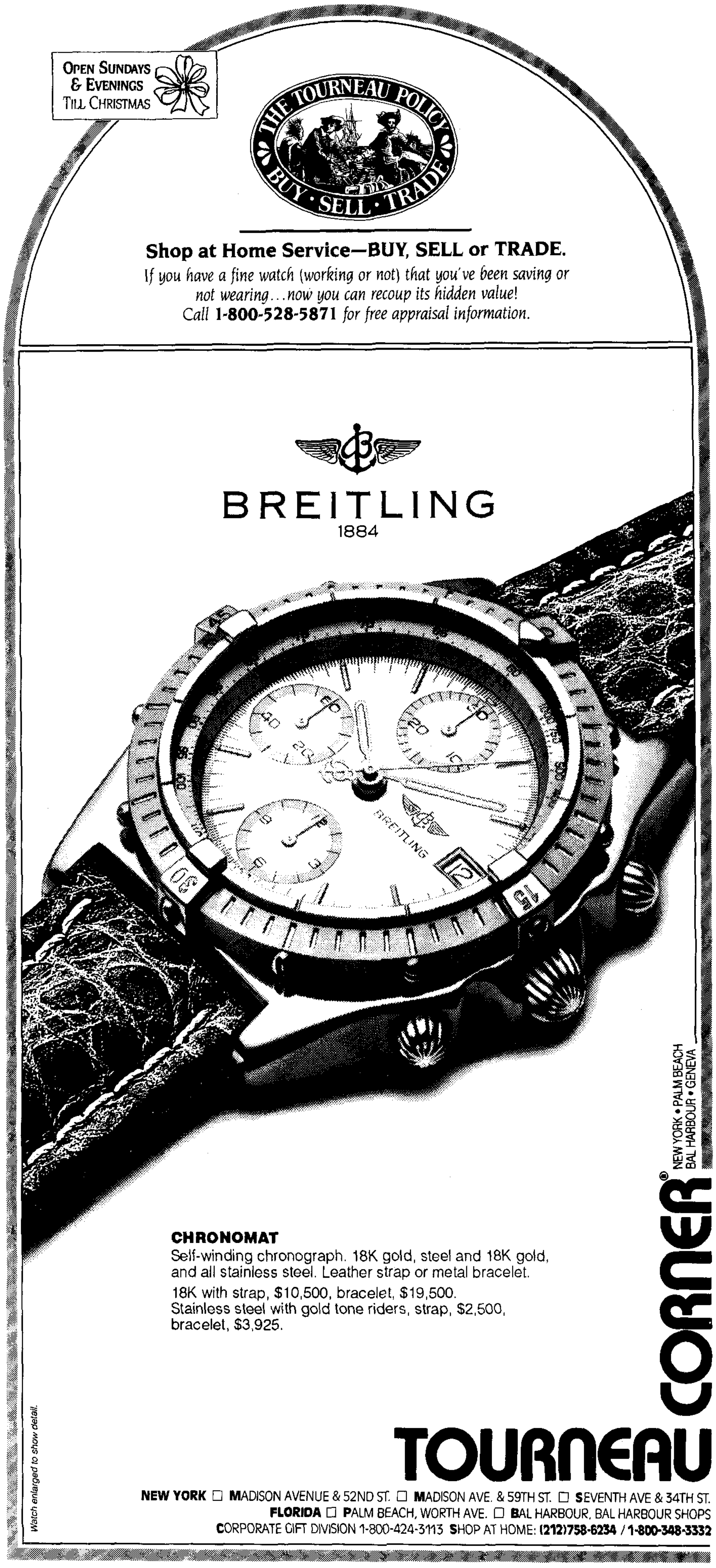

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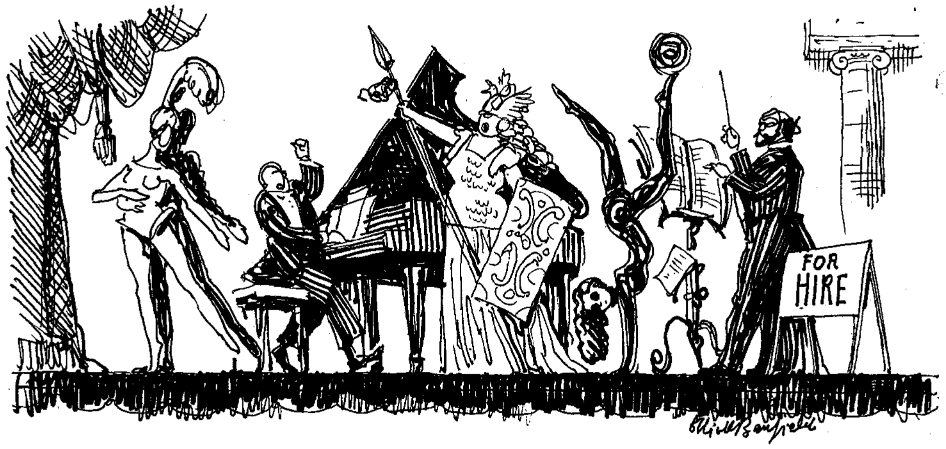
ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

CULTURE SHOPPING

A Louisiana impresario in the market for both a dance company and a string quartet comes to New York for some browsing.

BY CALVIN TRILLIN



ELLIOTT BANFIELD

IN the middle of December, my friend James Edmunds came to New York from New Iberia, Louisiana, with forty or fifty thousand dollars to spend on culture for the folks at home. To my mind, the folks couldn't have sent a better emissary. James has always lived in New Iberia, many miles from the nearest art museum or opera hall; he'll occasionally begin a sentence with the phrase "Here in the Third World . . ." Still, he is regularly referred to by my wife as the most cultured person we know. James is not the sort to flaunt his knowledge—he is a calm man in his early forties, with a sneaky, dry wit—but when it comes to music, for instance, he is equally conversant with the works of the minimalist composer Steve Reich and the zydeco accordionist Boozoo Chavis, also known as the Lake Charles Atomic Bomb.

Over the years, visits by James and his wife—Susan Hester, who is the program coördinator at the New Iberia Public Library and the first female member of the New Iberia Optimist Club—have reminded us that many people in the rest of the country count on trips to New York for storing up enough art and avant-garde theatre and dance and foreign movies and opera to last them for months, or even years. My cousin Keith Cushman, who grew up in Salina, Kansas, and is now an English professor in Greensboro, North Carolina, is one of those people. During one day of his latest visit to New York, shortly before James was here, he began the afternoon at the theatre for a matinée performance, ducked into a French movie as the shadows lengthened, and finished off the evening at the opera. When I heard about that the next morning, as he was preparing to go stand in line for tickets to the Matisse show, at the Museum of Modern Art, I said, "Cousin Keith, was that the most culture you've ever stuffed down yourself during one day in New York?"

"Not even close," Cousin Keith replied.

James's December visit was not for one of his personal culture binges. He was here to start putting together the 1993-94 season of the Performing Arts Society of Acadiana (PASA), which holds most of its events in the Heymann Performing Arts and Convention Center, in Lafayette, a city of a hundred thousand people twenty miles northwest of New Iberia. In December every year, people who run performing-arts series around the country gather at the New York Hilton for the meeting of APAP—the Association of Performing Arts Presenters. It isn't the sort of meeting that is likely to be switched some year to Las Vegas or Houston: in New York, a presenter can sometimes get a firsthand look at his future seasons simply by going to Lincoln Center or City Center or the Brooklyn Academy of Music or the Ballroom or Carnegie Hall or the 92nd Street Y or the Broadway theatre.

During APAP, there are also special sample performances in studios and lofts—a service that James once summed up to me as an opportunity to see an unlimited supply of bad dance. Until a couple of years ago, the conference took over one of the closed-circuit channels on Hilton television, so that, as James put it, a presenter could see an unlimited supply of bad dance without leaving his room. In the Hilton's meeting rooms, there are seminars on such matters as marketing and grantsmanship. And, most important to James, there are a couple of huge exhibition halls filled with booths representing just about any dance company or soprano or string quartet or folk group or children's repertory company or one-man show that anyone might want to present. James compares his time in the exhibition halls to strolling up and down the aisles at Delchamps Supermarket, in New Iberia: you run into old friends, you get a good idea of what's available, and, if you have only forty or fifty thousand dollars to spend for a season, you try to avoid impulse buying.

THERE was a time when the predecessor of the Performing Arts Society of Acadiana, the Fine Arts Foundation, had a much larger budget than that—this was during the oil boom in Lafayette, when, as people there say, "you went to Wendy's in your helicopter"—but there was also a time when the Fine Arts Foundation went bankrupt. PASA—closely watched by its treasurer, James Edmunds—tries to run a tighter ship. It has only one full-time paid employee. James himself is not in the culture-presenting business professionally. He's a writer and a magazine consultant. He has worked as a newspaper editor and a reporter and a columnist. (In the last role, he is remembered in some quarters for devising a scheme to generate profit from those moments we all have when we wonder whether some once prominent citizen who has just come up in conversation or shown up on "The Late Show" is still alive: it was a 900 number called the National Deadline, and the customer would tap into it simply by dialling 1-900-WHODEAD.) PASA's single permanent employee—Jackie Lyle, the executive director—was the other half of the team on the New York shopping expedition. James works easily with Jackie, despite her inability to suppress an interest in someday booking Brenda Bufalino's Tap Dance Orchestra. When an agent brings up a tap-dancing act, James is always diplomatic—he tends to look thoughtful and say something like "Maybe we can have an all-tap-dance season"—but in fact he hates tap dancing. "Tap dancing is excruciating after five minutes," he has said to Jackie. "Until then, it's only boring."

For presenting a season of, say, four events—a fifth, the national company of the New York City Opera, is taken care of in another budget—forty or fifty thousand dollars is not a lot of money. It's assumed, for one thing, that such a season would have to include a dance performance—partly because a city the size of Lafayette has almost a separate audience for dance, some of it inspired by the number of children in dance classes. (The Lafayette arts center is virtually unavailable to PASA in May, since that is the month when dance academies traditionally hold their recitals.) Even at the discounted rate available for a performance that can be folded into a preëxisting tour, the fee for a first-rate dance company playing a venue the size of Lafayette would run perhaps twenty thousand dollars. Paying the rate for a special trip to Lafayette by a dance company—what's called a run-out in the trade—is not something that the treasurer of PASA would countenance.

Customarily, a series of the sort presented in Lafayette would also include what James and Jackie call a hook event—something accessible enough to interest a broader audience and perhaps a corporate sponsor. This year's is Carol Channing and Rita Moreno in a show called "Two Ladies of Broadway." A good hook event is likely to cost as much as a good dance performance, and PASA, unlike a private promoter, can't make back the fee at the box office by booking a wildly popular act and charging whatever the market will bear: its mission includes bringing the performing arts to people who can pay only a modest ticket price and people who can't afford to pay at all. A bad hook event can be disastrous. At a meeting of Southwestern presenters that James attended at APAP, three people said that a Broadway act called "Jerry's Girls," which all agreed was "sub-high school," had made them wonder whether some more formal mechanism could be established among

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presenters to warn of the approach of a complete turkey in time to prevent, at least, their choosing that event as the occasion for holding a champagne reception for potential funders at intermission. A presenter who had scheduled such a reception during the intermission of "Jerry's Girls" said that she'd had no alternative but to keep pouring champagne right through the second act.

There are ways of stretching the budget. Sometimes, through an agent or a colleague James or Jackie may have met at the New York conference, PASA manages to get included in a block booking—a cluster of dates, which lowers rates considerably from a run-out. Once, because of contractual restraints on the number of miles that musicians could be asked to travel between concerts, Lafayette was just about the only logical place for the Warsaw Philharmonic to stop between Texarkana and Mobile, so the orchestra was left with a choice of having its musicians spend an evening in their motel rooms or having them present a concert at considerably discounted rates for the Performing Arts Society of Acadiana.

I wouldn't be surprised if some artists urge flexibility on their agents when negotiations with PASA are in progress: by now, the word must be out that southwestern Louisiana is a place where an entertainer can be well entertained. A pianist I know named Judy Carmichael—she's a petite young blond woman from California who plays the sort of stride piano that you'd expect to hear from a large old gent of color who has a lot of stories about the days when whorehouses were whorehouses—came back from her Louisiana concert with a rave review for a canoe ride in the eerie swamp of the Atchafalaya Basin spillway. The violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, who seemed enthralled by the local oysters, returned a few months after her concert for some alligator hunting. A group from PASA took the classical pianist Ruth Laredo to hear zydeco at a noted local establishment called El Sid-O's. Before members of the New York City Opera company climb on a bus at midnight in Lafayette to go to the next performance, they are traditionally fed boiled crawfish.

"You mean that in Lafayette artists get to go to zydeco joints or eat crawfish instead of going to patrons' receptions?" I asked James when I joined him for a day of the APAP meeting last December.

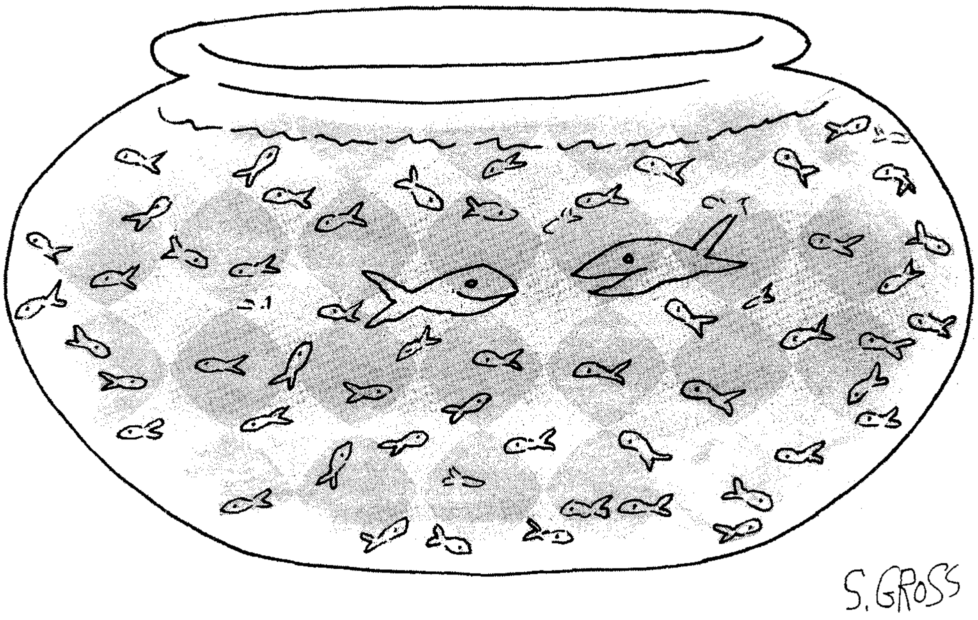
"No, indeed," James said. "That's their reward for enduring the patrons' reception."

A reception or a dinner with patrons remains standard on the concert circuit, even in Lafayette; an agent James knows calls that aspect of the tour the petting zoo. Even more important, James and Jackie think, is the visiting performer's willingness to do what are sometimes called residency activities—activities in the community that go beyond the formal stage appearance. This year, the Feld Ballet's appearance in Lafayette will include not only the performance but three master classes, an open rehearsal, and a seminar on stage makeup held at the Academy of Hair Technology.

On the other hand, a hint of arrogance or condescension by a performer is probably worse for the reputation than forgetting the entire second movement. In the days of the oil boom, a concert that was to be the high point of the Fine Arts Foundation season—the violinist Pinchas Zuckerman playing with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra—was described in the *Times* of Acadiana (the newspaper James used to edit) under the headline "Concerto Grosso." After arriving an hour late, because of transportation difficulties, Zuckerman, according to the *Times*, "inserted a Vivaldi concerto into a Mozart symphony and cut out part of a scheduled Mozart concerto . . . declined to sign autographs backstage and reneged on a promise to attend a reception with the Foundation's major supporters." Zuckerman was hissed by the audience and attacked at length in the newspaper by music lovers for treating Lafayette concertgoers as people who wouldn't know the difference between Vivaldi and Mozart. From what I gathered, PASA would never book Zuckerman, even if it could afford him.

Could there really be that many dance companies in the world? My first impression of the APAP meeting's exhibition halls—a collection of more than two hundred booths—was that they contained such a bewildering excess of bookable culture that a presenter with four or five dates to fill might, after one look, decide that the folks at home could probably make do with the local Footlight Players' production of "Arsenic and Old Lace." A lot of dance companies had booths of their own. In other booths, there were agencies representing, say, only folk musicians or only classical musicians, and there were agencies representing everything from baritones to standup comics. There was an extended booth for the largest company in the field—Columbia Artists Management, Inc., or CAMI, which has a client roster so big that its stable of sopranos alone runs to more than a hundred. There were individual booths run by the Slovene National Theatre and by the Paper Bag Players and by Ed Metzger, who does a one-man show as Ernest Hemingway and another one-man show as Albert Einstein. In one booth, there was an agency that seemed to specialize in performers who had been out of the limelight so long that their names would surely turn up in calls to the National Deadline.

Like a lot of people who walk into the Delchamps Supermarket, James and Jackie had some destinations in mind when they entered the APAP exhibition halls. They knew they'd stop by the I.C.M. Artists booth to talk with Paul Bongiorno, who arranged both the Warsaw Philharmonic stop and what has so far been the most successful hook event presented by PASA: Wynton Marsalis and his sextet. PASA is particularly keen on Marsalis—not just because he emerged from Louisiana's own jazz tradition but also because performing at the highest standards of excellence is, in James's view, found much less often on the circuit in jazz than in, say, classical music or dance—and James and Jackie had some interest in Bongiorno's suggestion that they book Marsalis again. They also wanted to stop by the CAMI booth to chat about the appearance of the New York City Opera, which this year will do "Carmen" in its pre-crawfish performance. Steve Gabriel, at CAMI, had been pushing a couple of hook events of his own: Bobby McFerrin with the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, if that turned out to be possible to arrange after an appearance in New Orleans; and Lynn Redgrave, who is putting together an evening of Shakespeare as a tribute to her father. James and Jackie also made a brief stop at the booth of an agency called Gurtman & Murtha to check the price of booking Victor Borge, which proved to be so high that it would leave about enough money for the rest of the season to hire a couple of country fiddlers from Mamou willing to work for an honorarium and some warm applause.



"I guess we'd be considered a family. We're living together, we love each other, and we haven't eaten the children yet."

• •

James and Jackie stopped to chat at a number of the dance booths, including those of José Limón and Paul Taylor and the Oakland Ballet and the Bill T Jones / Arnie Zane Dance Company and a Chicago group called the Hubbard Street Dance Company. Although dance draws relatively large crowds in Lafayette, it also draws telephone calls asking if the performance is going to be weird or erotic. James says that the most soothing answer to the question about eroticism is "It's erotic, but you wouldn't know it." They stopped at Stanley Weinstein's booth to talk about the availability of a cabaret singer named Helen Schneider. Although Helen Schneider is not the most widely known singer in her field, James has become convinced that she does a unique interpretation of Kurt Weill, for whom he has a devotion comparable to his devotion to Boozoo Chavis.

James had become familiar with Schneider through her Weill recordings. He is a careful reader of magazines like *Stereo Review* and *Fanfare*, and a steady special-order customer at a Lafayette store that is called, for reasons he can't remember, Raccoon Records. On some trips to New York, he has had the great pleasure of seeing his first live performance of a singer or a chamber group he has been listening to on CDs for years; the evening before APAP started, that had happened with Mirella Freni, the Metropolitan Opera soprano, who is perhaps James's favorite living singer. Opera is the one form of music that can turn James almost evangelical. Last year, concerned that opera didn't occupy a proper place in our family even though we live right in Manhattan, James arranged to go to the Metropolitan Opera with my wife and me three or four times in the course of the season, and sent tapes and librettos ahead so that we could bone up on what we were about to see. I told him that the project reminded me of one of those cultural-enrichment programs for inner-city children.

Weinstein was happy to talk about Helen Schneider, but he also wanted to talk about a William Bolcom musical called "Casino Paradise" and an offbeat cabaret trio called BETTY, whose performance was described in a review Weinstein had as "an estrogen-soaked evening."

"Do you have any feminist audience at all?" Weinstein asked.

James looked at Jackie. "Maybe those two ladies in the first row, off to the right," he said.

"A21 and A22," Jackie said, nodding in confirmation.

James turned back to Weinstein. "Well, it's not real large," he said.

JAMES and Jackie spent almost three hours strolling through the exhibition halls. When they finally plopped down in one of the Hilton lounges for what James refers to generically as a three-dollar coke, he had the feeling that they had a shortlist for the 1993-94 season to talk over with the PASA board. He had long wanted to book the Paul Taylor Dance Company, but the schedule for its tour made a Lafayette stop possible only at a time that seemed dangerously close to the New York City Opera's "Madam Butterfly." James and Jackie were leaning toward the Hubbard Street Dance Company: its fee is lower than some of the other groups', but they could be confident of its quality, because its agent had been alert enough to arrange for them to see a performance when the company came through Baton Rouge in 1991. One or another of the hook events seemed likely to work out; James had been particularly impressed by assurances that Lynn Redgrave would be happy to do a lot of residency activity. In a search for something to please "the music wonks," a group that includes James himself, the PASA shoppers had stopped by the booth of the Kronos Quartet, one of the most renowned string quartets now playing, but they were leaning toward the Orion Quartet, a somewhat younger group, which is also well thought of and comes at about half the price. James had his heart set on Helen Schneider. All in all, James and Jackie figured that they had put in a pretty good day at APAP. Something called "Opening Night Dine-Arounds" was available to APAP registrants that evening, but the PASA delegation wouldn't be participating. June Anderson was singing "Lucia di Lammermoor" at the Metropolitan Opera. ♦

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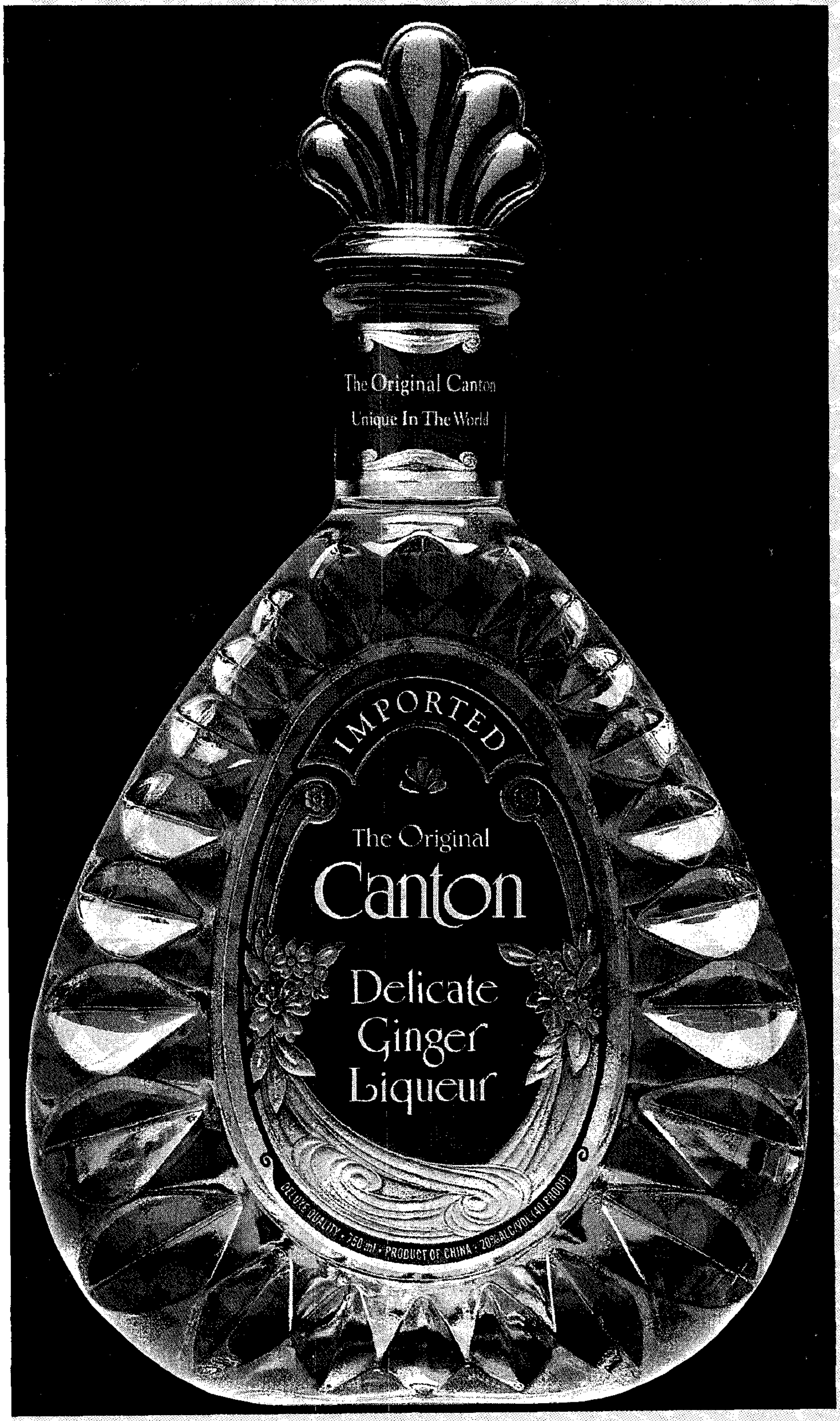
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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

ADVENTURES IN BABYSITTING

The Clinton team and Zoë Baird may have badly miscalculated the fragility of her nomination as Attorney General. But only when the confirmation proceedings began to unravel did it become clear that many of the major players were less concerned with Baird than with vindicating their own agendas.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

BILL CLINTON entered by bus from the south. The enemy was vanquished, its shock troops in retreat to the provinces or left to fill out unemployment-benefits forms. His partisans in the capital, having survived twelve years of occupation, eagerly awaited the liberator. Washington was an open city.

Clinton's arrival had been carefully orchestrated ever since his November 3rd victory. As a signal that he would definitely not be Carter redux, the President-elect ventured from Little Rock in late fall to pay homage to the importance of a couple of hundred Washington dignitaries at dinner parties given by Pamela Harriman and Vernon Jordan and Katharine Graham. Democratic congressional leaders were invited to Arkansas to demonstrate the end of divided government—another counter-Carter sign. Clinton completed the gesture by meeting with the Democratic leaders on the Hill in early December, and answering their policy questions in detail without the aid of index cards. The members were ecstatic at his self-possessed performance and the promise of collaboration. "You don't know how refreshing it is to have a President of the United States who can talk about issues," one representative said, to applause and cheering. "Everyone is so grateful to have this Presidency back that he will be indulged," remarked another, fresh from the euphoric caucus room. Clinton would be a master of Washington.

On Sunday, January 17th, Clinton retraced the route of Thomas Jefferson's trip to Washington for *his* inauguration, starting from Monticello. Coming to Washington was staged this way as the fitting conclusion to Clinton's own long journey. At the precise moment that afternoon when he appeared on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, surveying a crowd of perhaps three hundred thousand people, a squadron of jets soared overhead. Thus, thunderously, the transfer of power began.

About two miles away, Zoë Baird, having quietly entered Washington by plane from the north, was closeted in a downtown law office. The celebration was shut out. Instead of taking part in it, or even viewing it, Clinton's nominee for Attorney General was being rehearsed for an inquisition. A moot court was in session, with Baird on the stand. Her lawyers and advisers from the Clinton confirmation team played members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, battering her with questions intended to pry her apart. They attempted to presage what they believed might be damaging hearings in the week to come. Baird was alternately cool and flustered, professional and insecure. She was unflappable on all the issues that dominated the practice session except one: how to handle the fact that she had hired illegal immigrants to care for her child. Exactly what she should say was in dispute, but it was agreed that once she had uttered the magic phrases the prize would be hers. "The context in which the conversation took place was one in which her nomination was going forward," a member of the team said. "The nature of the debate was the best way to broach the issue, minimize the impact—getting her to recognize it as a problem. The assumption was that she was going forward." As Baird left the law office, with a friend, they could see the fireworks bursting over the Potomac. "Everyone was having a good time but us," the friend said.

Baird claimed that one adviser told her that her hiring of illegal aliens was a violation similar to incurring a parking ticket.

SCOTT HUNT

For all the tension surrounding Baird, the Clinton operatives did not sense a crisis. The strategy was to treat the child-care story as a non-story—to dismiss it, have her acknowledge the minor blemish on her record—and watch it disappear into the back pages. "We were moving forward on fourteen members of the Cabinet," a Clinton staffer who worked on the Baird case explained. "Frankly, there was more attention paid to others"—notably Secretary of Commerce-designate Ron Brown, for his lobbying connections, and Health and Human Services-designate Donna Shalala, for allowing free-speech curbs when she was president of the University of Wisconsin. The Clintonians were also preoccupied with their own situations. Many had at long last arrived from isolated Little Rock, and other points far and wide. They had to find apartments, scope out new offices, help spouses find jobs, arrange for schools, even get help with child care. In the very short run, their time was consumed by shuffling through the rounds of Inaugural parties. That Sunday night, James Carville, Clinton's campaign strategist, served alligator gumbo in the Presidential Lounge at Union Station. But the expansive "American Reunion," spilling from the Mall to the reviewing stand on Lafayette Park, was about to be enveloped by the claustrophobia of the airless room. The effort to contain Baird's problem only magnified it: the legal snafu was transformed into a political calamity. What began as a misadventure in babysitting became the opening scene of Clinton's Presidency, presenting him, as the curtain rose, as beset, defensive, and ignorant.

Zoë Baird, for her part, initially appeared as a blank slate. Within hours, however, she would make the uniquely American passage from anonymity to icon. She would come to personify the selfish yuppie of our time, her sterile professionalism only a veneer for greed. Whatever her identity might have been, it was shattered by a political explosion precipitated by a nearly imperceptible tripwire.

5°

Down the long avenues the north wind
doubles over the strongest men.

Everything has turned to iron:
buildings, pavement, the stunted trees.

Even the sky, from which lapis stars glint,
painful to the naked eye.

But for the clouds of their breath,
a man and his dog might be statues.

The pretzel vender, his fingers brittle,
rakes his coals and sucks on a chip of ice.

In an archway, under a slanting hat,
a young woman is lighting a cigarette.

There is nothing in her eyes but the spit
of flame—amber enclosing a crimson thread—

as her shadow slips away, into a waiting car,
and the sidewalk swallows her up.

The smoke of her cigarette lingers,
coiling and floating across the street

intact—a halo that hovers all night
beneath the parapet of the church

where the angel with feverish eyes
snatches it up at dawn as the snow

begins to fall, and places it—heavy
as marble suddenly—behind his head.

—NICHOLAS CHRISTOPHER

ZOË BAIRD, forty years old, was about to cap a career that a friend referred to as "beyond meteoric." Among her talents, she seemed to have a flawless ability to position herself as a protégée. "Zoë's a superb networker, able to gain the confidence of important older men, from Lloyd Cutler to Bill Coleman"—Secretary of Transportation under President Ford and a partner in the Washington law firm O'Melveny & Myers—"to Warren Christopher to Vernon Jordan to Bill Clinton," one of her former law-firm colleagues observed. "She does it studiously. She works very hard at it." And a friend said, "She gives good daughter."

Baird's first leap came by way of Lloyd Cutler. In 1979, President Carter, drifting and isolated, attempted to gain wisdom (and credibility within the capital) by bringing several eminent figures of the establishment into the White House, among them Cutler, a senior partner in the Washington law firm Wilmer, Cutler, Pickering; he was made White House legal counsel. In an effort to help Carter in the redistricting that would take place as a result of the 1980 census, Cutler recommended that census jobs be made into political appointments, but when the proposal passed through the Justice Department a twenty-seven-year-old woman there firmly opposed it, asserting that the scheme was illegal. Astonishingly, she prevailed. Cutler was so impressed with the nerve and the intellect of that woman, Zoë Baird, that he brought her over to the White House to work for him. When Carter lost, Cutler tried to recruit her for his law firm, but he was merely one of several powerful mentors courting Baird. Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher was another, and she regularly sought his advice. His offer to her to join him at O'Melveny & Myers was accepted.

Despite her ease in the higher echelons, Baird was far from a child of privilege and prestige. She was born in Brooklyn and raised in Bothell, Washington, a small town near Seattle, where her father was the vice-president of the local radio operators' union and a member of the King County Labor Council, active in Democratic politics. Her mother made costume jewelry part-time. It seemed natural for Zoë herself to be politically active. In 1972, she took a semester off from college to help manage Representative Brock Adams' reëlection campaign. Baird was a classic working-class striver, a meritocrat who rose by virtue of her own efforts and the impressive credentials that accrued as a result. Her contacts were a by-product of a driven nature, and her ascent seemingly a straight line: from the University of California at Berkeley, law school at Berkeley's Boalt Hall, a clerkship to a federal judge in San Francisco, the Carter Administration jobs and O'Melveny. "Zoë struck everyone as a star," said Joseph Onek, a Washington lawyer, who worked with her in the White House. "She is very level-headed, can argue with people without making them feel they're not being listened to. You feel you've been heard." In the tables of political classification, Onek sees her as "a liberal Democrat, whatever that means."

"She's very much like Bill Clinton," another lawyer friend suggested. "She has liberal instincts, but is very practical."

Still another friend, Leon Wieseltier, the literary editor of *The New Republic*, said, "Her intelligence is efficient, fast, fair, down to earth, reformist. She has exactly the sort of calm you want in a room during a crisis."

In 1986, Baird married Paul Gewirtz, a constitutional-law professor at Yale. He had gone to Columbia and Yale Law, clerked for Thurgood Marshall, and worked for Lloyd Cutler at Wilmer, Cutler. He had also been an activist for much of the nineteen-seventies, at the Center for Law and Social Policy, a public-interest law firm, where he concentrated on civil-rights issues. During the debates over the Civil Rights Act in the Bush era, Gewirtz would weigh in as an adviser to Senator Paul Simon and Vernon Jordan, and he also contributed articles to *The New Republic*. He loved teaching, including courses on the law and literature. In 1992, he was awarded the Potter Stewart Chair, endowed by Stewart's family, friends, and former clerks. But he was not solely devoted to the theory of law: he took on a few cases, even arguing one, on the establishment of religion, before the Supreme Court. His friends speculated that he himself would someday be appointed a federal judge.

The large Baird–Gewirtz wedding was held at the Carlton Hotel, near the White House, with a rather lengthy piano recital preceding the ceremony. (Gewirtz is an accomplished classical pianist.) The bride was apprehensive about leaving her familiar surroundings in Washington. Not the least of her anxieties was that she had no new job awaiting her. Joe Onek delivered a toast: "It is a tragedy Zoë is leaving. She was going to be the female Lloyd Cutler. But she is going to Connecticut, where she will wind up as governor." Almost immediately upon her settling in New Haven, she was hired as the general counsel to General Electric, headquartered in nearby Fairfield. John Welch, the chief executive officer, joined what had become her pantheon of mentors.

"She thought of herself as an idealist in a suit," one of her friends said. She represented her corporate clients as a professional, but she also lived in the world of her husband, in a big, old house bordering the Yale campus; their friends tended to be more academic than corporate.

Baird herself offered professionalism as a creed against the prevailing ideology of the nineteen-eighties. When Ronald Reagan came into office, she collaborated on an article in *Legal Times* urging the new Attorney General, William French Smith, to adopt a "neutral viewpoint insulated from political pressure." Her idealism manifested itself as managerialism, which for her represented efficiency, integrity, and innovation.

In 1989, her son, Julian, was born. The following year, she was named the general counsel at Aetna Life and Casualty. (In 1991, her salary was $507,105.) Aetna was based in Hartford, half an hour's drive from her home, in New Haven. Now the obligations of the working mother assumed for Baird a greater urgency. A little more than three years later, her dilemma was to be thrust back at her in a Senate hearing room.

Zoë Baird needed child care. An agency had provided an American citizen, who worked for five and half months and then, giving two weeks' notice, quit. Baird and Gewirtz placed ads in three local newspapers:

> Child Care Nanny. Live-in Nanny for 7-Mo. old Boy in warm family setting. Light housekeeping, cook dinners. Long term position with appreciative family in beautiful home. Non-smoker. Driver. Citizen or Green Card only. Require child care references.

There was no response. At their own expense, they flew an American woman in from Texas who had been recommended by an agency. She refused the job, because, she candidly explained, she didn't feel comfortable working for a Jewish family. Other applicants were sent by agencies: one said she didn't want to leave her current job; one took another job on the evening of the interview; one had a negative reference from her current employer; one belatedly admitted that she smoked; one, after several days' employment, fled, because of homesickness. Finally, an agency sent Lillian Cordero, a Peruvian woman, who, Baird felt, could properly care for Julian. Cordero had two recent references—from households in Scarsdale and New Rochelle, where she had worked during the previous two years. The only hitch seemed to be that Cordero came with a husband. Though Baird and Gewirtz didn't need a couple, they hired the Corderos anyway. To get the woman, they decided to employ the man: he could act as a chauffeur. Their worrisome problem seemed to be solved.

It was July of 1990. School was out. According to a family friend, Professor Gewirtz told his busy wife that as a summer project he would take care of all the legal work involving the Corderos. He immediately got in touch with two immigration lawyers, but he didn't hire them. During a conversation with one of them, he was told that he could not pay taxes until there was a Social Security number, and obtaining one required a green card. Finally, in November, he got in touch with Thomas Belote, the immigration lawyer who, he felt, could best handle the green-card-application process. Belote had been recommended by former associates of Gewirtz's from the United States Attorney's office for the Southern District of New York.

Gewirtz, taking Belote's advice, eventually filed an application for Alien Employment Certification with the Labor Department. The document notes that Lillian Cordero fell into the category of "E.W.I.," or "Entry Without Inspection"; that is, she was illegal. (This application and subsequent ones were for Lillian Cordero only. Her documentation would guarantee that of her husband as a matter of course.) The Department of Labor certified Gewirtz's form, making no referral for any enforcement action. He was advised to send the certification to the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which could in time grant Cordero a green card. Gewirtz then filed an application for Lillian Cordero with the I.N.S., making full disclosure, freely acknowledging her status as E.W.I. The I.N.S. responded to Gewirtz shortly after he filed, on October 22, 1992: "The above petition has been approved." No penalties were assessed for the open illegality, and Cordero was approved for a green card; it would be issued when her number in the visa waiting list came up. By this time, however, Lillian Cordero's husband had deserted her. And a month after the petition was approved she left the household, too.

Gewirtz had assumed, according to a close friend, that once Cordero got her green card she would get a Social Security card, and he would then pay her taxes. He had paid her by check all along, so that he could calculate what he owed. He asked Belote if he should set up an escrow account, but Belote said he didn't need to do so. "Paul knew penalties would accrue," Belote said in an interview. "We discussed the options." Asked if Gewirtz had intended to pay the taxes, Belote said, "Yes, absolutely. Anything to the contrary would be erroneously attributed." Thus Gewirtz, according to his friends, believed he was following the advice of his lawyer. As for Zoë Baird, one of her advisers told me, "Zoë never talked to any lawyer about these matters. The only lawyer Zoë talked to was Paul Gewirtz."

Lillian Cordero's departure coincided with Bill Clinton's election as President. Paul and Zoë had met Bill and Hillary years before, during Renaissance Weekend, the annual festival for earnest networkers held at Hilton Head, South Carolina. With Clinton on his way to the White House, Baird was swallowed, almost instantly, into the transition maw. And Gewirtz, his friends reasonably conjectured, might soon be in line for a federal judgeship. Vetting for Baird's appointment began at once. Exactly what her position might be was left unclear; the vetting team was simply told that it would be something important. She was sponsored by one of her original mentors, Warren Christopher, who was now the chairman of the transition, and whom Clinton trusted implicitly.

As a token of the integrity that she would bring to government, Baird herself confessed to hiring an illegal immigrant. Immediately, a member of the vetting team got in touch with fifteen immigration lawyers, one after another, and was told by each that there was no real problem. Nobody thought that it was significant; nobody believed that it would even be disclosed. Nominees for many jobs, now and in the past, had disclosed far worse things (including felony convictions for marijuana use). Senate committees (including the Judiciary Committee) had managed to withhold damaging information in personal files if it was considered irrelevant to a nominee's over-all qualifications.

The presence of the august Christopher seemed to preclude any doubts. He involved himself directly in the vetting process. If Clinton was Christopher's deferential son, Baird was Christopher's daughter. He described the contents of her file to Clinton, assuring him that there was no problem. "Christopher had a great investment in Zoë," one of her confirmation-team advisers said. "He was an intimidating factor. Maybe he shouldn't have been involved in the vetting process at all. But nobody saw that it would be fatal."

At first, Baird was slated to be the White House legal counsel—a position that required no Senate confirmation. Her interview with Clinton, by all accounts, went extremely well. Meanwhile, women's groups were pressuring him to appoint a woman as Attorney General. But, for reasons that remain unexplained, their candidate, Brooksley Born, a Washington lawyer, who believed that she had the job, was rejected. Clinton angrily railed, in public, against "bean-counters." Then, less than twenty-four hours after rebuffing Born, on December 23rd, he announced Baird's nomination—a woman, but Clinton's woman. Moreover, she had already passed the vetting process.

About six weeks earlier, on November 12th, Baird had attended the twentieth-anniversary dinner of the National Women's Law Center, in Washington. She had long been active with the group, and she had arranged for Aetna to be one of two corporate underwriters of the event, where an award was given to Anita Hill. In accepting the honor, Hill remarked, "There were so many times during the hearings when we felt like we were winging it."

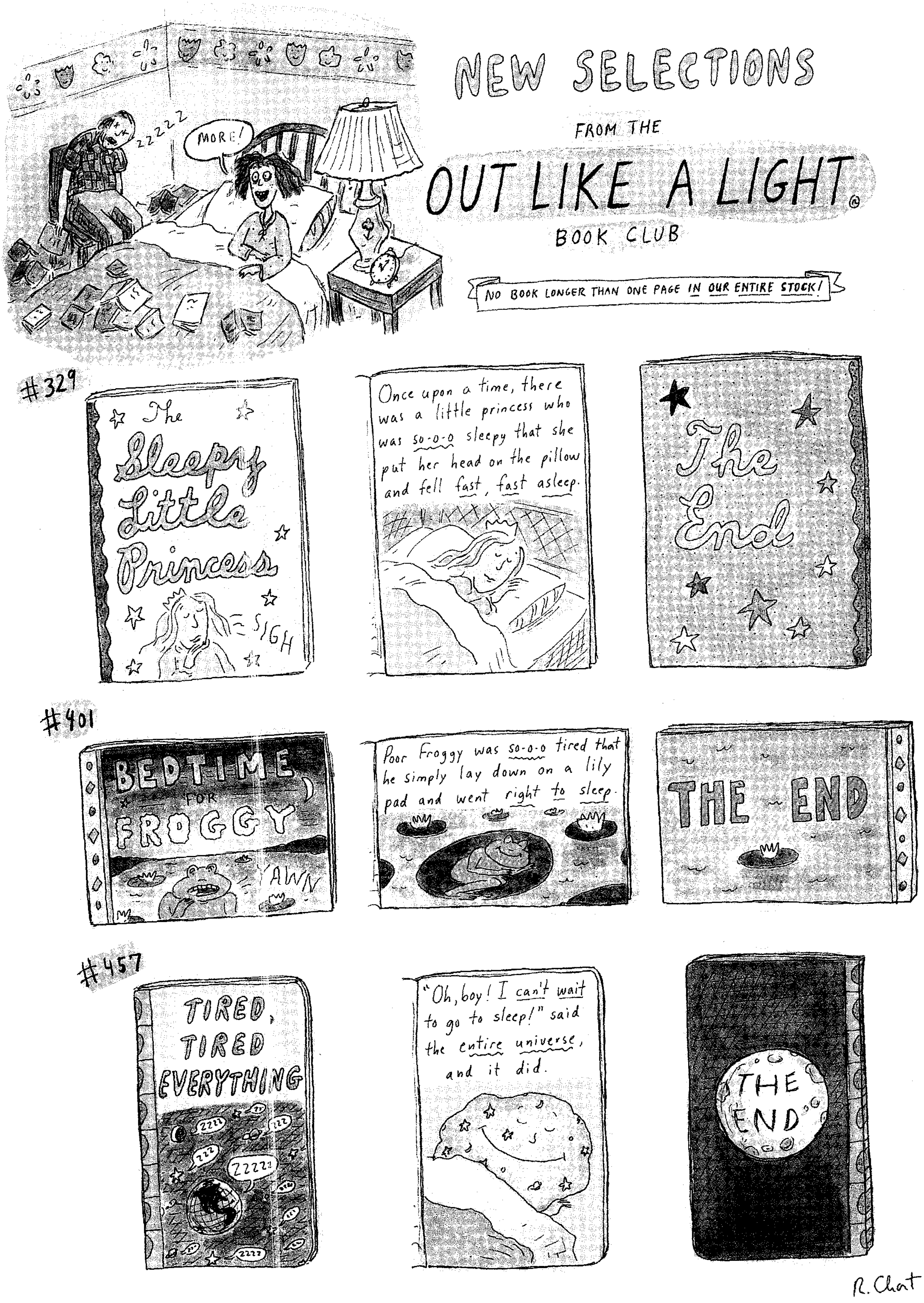
BAIRD's nomination surprised Baird, as it did others, including Senator Joseph Biden, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. "There was not a single, solitary communication, directly, indirectly, sub rosa—none, not at all—until the name was announced," Biden told me. "They tried to contact me, the way Reagan used to, just before they waltzed her out on the twenty-fourth."

Biden was eager to make the first Democratic President in twelve years look good, especially on the first nominee to appear before Biden's committee. But he was even more eager to restore the committee's reputation, which had been nearly poisoned by the Anita Hill affair. Biden's task was not only to help the new President but also to reëstablish the integrity of the holdover committee members as senators and men. He was especially enthusiastic that two new women senators—Carol Moseley Braun and Dianne Feinstein—were now members, too. Biden was determined to avoid the appearance of glossing over any wrongdoing by any nominee. And he wanted evidence on everything.

Biden often senses impending catastrophe. He has experienced the worst, both personally and politically. His first wife and daughter were killed in a car crash in 1972, shortly before he was elected to the Senate, and at the age of thirty he was sworn in to office at the hospital bedside of his two sons. In 1987, he launched a Presidential campaign based nebulously on the theme of generational change. Just as it seemed that he would fill the vacuum left by Gary Hart's abrupt departure, a *Times* story reported that he had plagiarized British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock's stump speech, and he was forced to withdraw. Then, as the chairman of the Judiciary Committee during the Clarence Thomas hearings, he was maligned by some of those who did not like the outcome. Biden is a forceful speaker before crowds but is also voluble and prolix. His greatest strength as a politician is his proximity to his middle-class roots. Every night, he takes the train from Union Station to Wilmington, Delaware, his home, and he often walks the Wilmington streets like a precinct captain.

The confirmation team asked Biden if he could schedule Baird's hearing for January 11th, but Biden, like the rest of the committee, did not want to repeat the Hill fiasco. "Because I've been down this road before, from bitter experience, we take the investigative side seriously," he said. He informed the team that he would hold hearings when the required report from the Federal Bureau of Investigation was available to him. "I wouldn't set a hearing until I had something definitive."

Baird called him as soon as she was nominated, and they agreed to meet on January 5th. Biden knew nothing of the illegal aliens. Baird told him that it was a civil violation, not a criminal one, and that was true. She said that one of her advisers had suggested that it might be similar to a "parking ticket," to which Biden replied that it could be "a big problem." Yet he was hardly making a final judgment. She presented only a general outline of the situation. He admitted that he didn't know all the law involved: he needed to see all the reports, all the documentation, and then he would figure out how best to present the material to the committee. He encouraged her to relate the matter to other members of the committee, singling out Senators Edward Kennedy, Orrin Hatch, and Alan Simpson. The issue, he


NEW SELECTIONS
FROM THE
OUT LIKE A LIGHT®
BOOK CLUB
NO BOOK LONGER THAN ONE PAGE IN OUR ENTIRE STOCK!
ZZZZZZ
MORE!
#329
The Sleepy Little Princess
SIGH
Once upon a time, there was a little princess who was so-o-o sleepy that she put her head on the pillow and fell fast, fast asleep.
The End
#401
BEDTIME FOR FROGGY
YAWN
Poor Froggy was so-o-o tired that he simply lay down on a lily pad and went right to sleep.
THE END
#457
TIRED, TIRED EVERYTHING
ZZZZ
ZZZ
ZZZZZ
"Oh, boy! I can't wait to go to sleep!" said the entire universe, and it did.
THE END
R. Chast

stressed, was "a big, big, big deal." Still, his intent was to corroborate her story. After she left his office, he remarked to an aide, "This is no parking ticket. This is a freeway crash."

The next meeting between the nominee and the chairman was on January 12th. Biden still had no F.B.I. report and no documents from Baird. He was beginning to see her nomination as a series of political snares. Baird again explained that the violation was civil, and attempted to go through the chronology. Biden believed that she could be confirmed but that the fact of her having broken the law could easily destroy her chances. The "technicalities," as he called them, were no excuse. "You have a big problem," he said. "The only thing you can do is treat this in a political context. You have to explain to me and the American people what you were thinking at the time—the human dimension of it."

Baird kept returning to the chronology of her husband's dealings with immigration lawyers, trying to find salvation in the details.

"That doesn't matter," Biden said. "You have to frame this."

"This is civil," she said. "We've paid the taxes now." (Earlier in the month, they had paid about twelve thousand dollars in back taxes.)

Biden chided her for potentially offending "the middle class, the people who pay their taxes," and said, "You have to understand how this is perceived by a middle-class guy like me. You look like an important person who makes a lot of money, who looks like you think you're above the rules."

Tears welled up in Baird's eyes, and her voice quavered.

"You can still do this," Biden said, trying to comfort her.

She thought so, too. "I understand what you're saying," she said.

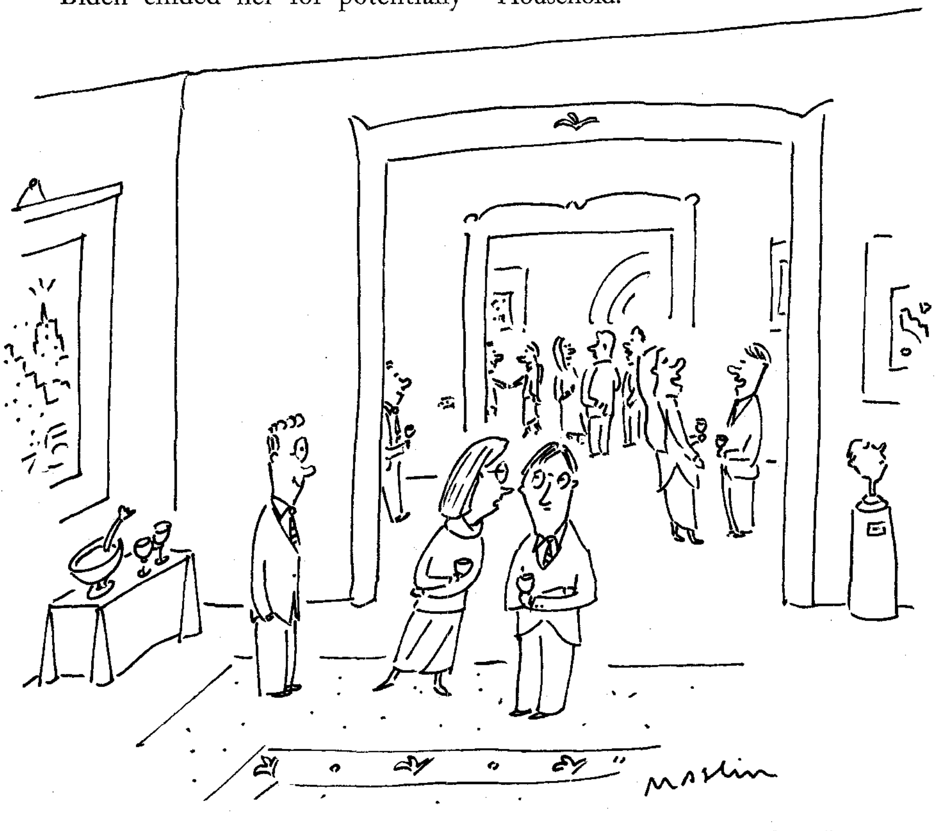
Baird and Biden had not been meeting alone. They were both accompanied by aides. (One of Baird's, Ron Klain, slated to be associate counsel to the President, had been Biden's chief counsel on the Judiciary Committee. Another lawyer advising Baird, Mark Gitenstein, had been Klain's successor at the committee. Biden maintained a close relationship with both.) Biden believed that the incoming Administration was apprised of Baird's problem because its representatives were present in the room. When he grumbled at home about the political trouble he saw ahead, his wife told him to call Clinton directly. "He already knows," Biden replied.

On January 14th, on page 1, the *Times* reported, "Clinton's Choice for Justice Dept. Hired Illegal Aliens for Household."

Numerous people in the Clinton Administration, in the Senate, and on Baird's team attest that the story was leaked to the newspaper by someone in the F.B.I. No one had the documents except Baird and the F.B.I. "That was some tough investigative work. They read her questionnaire," a Senate aide said later, smirking. The effect was to depict the Bureau as a diligent investigator, which was not the image it had projected during the Hill affair. What the Bureau had actually done was far different from what the G-man piece suggested. Before the publication of the *Times* story, according to people in the Senate and on Baird's team, the F.B.I. agent in charge of drawing up Baird's background report had made hypothetical presentations to I.N.S. and I.R.S. officials in Hartford which exactly duplicated the facts in the Baird case. The I.N.S. officials said that they would do nothing under the circumstances described; the I.R.S. agents declared that since taxes had already been paid voluntarily they would do nothing, either. After the F.B.I.'s leak, the agent who had made the presentations called the Boston regional office of the I.N.S., this time giving Baird's name. And this time, amid the publicity, the I.N.S. declared that Baird owed civil penalties. The following day, January 16th, she and her husband paid the I.N.S. twenty-nine hundred dollars. "Ms. Baird has taken responsibility for this matter," a statement issued by George Stephanopoulos, Clinton's communications director, read. "We are pleased the matter is now resolved."

"There was the naïve thought it wouldn't get public," one of Baird's advisers said. "Once it became public, there was no coherent strategy how this ought to be put out—just plead guilty, say it's not a disqualifying problem." The next day, an avalanche of unfavorable op-ed pieces fell on Baird. "Needed: Answers from Ms. Baird," an editorial in the *Times* on January 15th was headed. "Mr. Clinton, for all his promises of setting higher standards, has obviously decided to look the other way," the text read. "Mr. Biden and his colleagues—anxious to avoid inciting the ire of women still angry about his committee's offensive questioning of Anita Hill—seem prepared to do the same." (Biden received a copy of the F.B.I. report on the night of the fourteenth, at least a day after the *Times* did.)

Baird, the consumer activist Ralph



"You plugged him into our conversation, you unplug him."

"You know, you've got something there, Spikey—the Lone Ranger was a sort of consultant."

• •

Nader proclaimed, was the "corporate candidate," a tribune of the "Demican Party," guilty of "premeditated criminal activity." Nader had been at odds with Clinton since the beginning of the Democratic primaries. He ran as a write-in candidate in New Hampshire, drawing scant attention and finishing last. He then abandoned his own quixotic effort and joined Jerry Brown's populist crusade, principally advising the attacks on Clinton. Now he dashed off a letter to Biden denouncing Baird: "Highly disturbing reports about a presidential nominee are swept under the fancy rugs of the Inaugural Ball," it said. Nader got himself booked on radio talk shows and became the first to sound the alarm; it rapidly built to a screeching decibel level.

On Sunday, January 17th, the day Clinton rolled into Washington and Baird was tested in the moot court, she still believed she had committed a "technical violation" that had been "regularized," as she put it, by disclosure. She might have assailed the law as an anomaly, but she, like everyone else, was fatigued. "Let's not get into too much detail, let's not let the hearing be dominated by it" was the attitude, according to an adviser. So the game plan was agreed upon: she would accept "responsibility," and Biden would lead the questioning on the issue in order to dispense with it at the start. But this, one adviser commented, would leave her "without much explanation." So while Washington partied she studied her briefing books in her room at the Jefferson Hotel. Despite the plan, Gewirtz was telling her as late as Monday night that it was a "technical violation" and that she should argue as such in the hearing, and also that she should stress that it was he, not she, who had attended to the child-care problem.

Before the start of the hearing, on January 19th, Biden pulled Baird into his conference room. His own committee investigators had just gathered the information on Gewirtz's hiring of immigration lawyers. Biden had believed that Gewirtz's actions had taken place at the same moment as the hiring of Cordero, but now discovered that they had not. The senator felt that he had been misled by omission. His anger was "intense," said an aide. If Baird insisted on saying she had committed only a "technical" violation and was not contrite, he would oppose her. She began to cry, tears streaking her face. She agreed to do what he said. "He did exactly what he said he was going to do," said an adviser. "She did exactly what she said she was going to do. Zoë was not taking the advice of her husband, who was not in the room."

When the hearing began, Baird's opening statement was often high-flown and vague, listing her ideals as "nonpartisanship, professionalism, integrity, and promoting the ideal of justice." Her message was unfocussed. What was primarily missing was a sense of herself, except in one regard—what she described as "my child-care situation." She explained that she had tried to obey the law but had been "wrong," adding, "And I deeply regret it." Here, too, her statement was formulaic. Biden, according to plan, opened the questioning with the child-care issue.

Baird tried to balance contrite pleading with legal precision: "In my hope to find appropriate child care for my son, that I could have confidence might give him some continuity, I gave too little emphasis to what was described to me as a technical violation of the law."

Again and again, Biden forced her to admit that she had broken the law. Did she understand why the public was "upset about this"?

"Quite honestly, I was acting at that time really more as a mother than as someone who would be sitting here designated to be Attorney General," she answered.

"To me this is a big deal, personally, and I suspect it is to a lot of Americans," Biden said, reiterating what he had said to her privately. The exchange did not have the intended effect of ending the controversy; rather, it roiled it. By wrapping herself in motherhood, Baird invited comparison with mothers who did not have her resources. Unintentionally, she raised the class question. And Biden's hammering, which he hoped would subdue the contention by emphasizing her openness, had the opposite effect. He had seen the serious political danger before anyone else. By humiliating her, he damaged her; his attempt to contain the danger was backfiring.

Nor was Baird's beleaguerment relieved by the gallantry of Orrin Hatch. The conservative Republican had been a merciless inquisitor of Anita Hill, and Baird gave him the opportunity to reverse his role. He may have hoped that by gaining sympathy for her he could gain some for himself. His unexpected encouragement might also be attributed to potential legal complications of his own, stemming from his having secured a loan for a friend from the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. Just the week before, he had set up a legal-defense fund for himself in anticipation of possible indictment. An Attorney General who viewed him favorably would not be a negligible asset. "You're one of the big-league home-run hitters," he said to Baird. "I am satisfied that this episode should not disqualify a well-qualified and talented individual such as Ms. Baird from public service." If there was a problem, it was not Ms. Baird, but the silly law. "I hate to say this, but sometimes Mr. Bumble is correct," Hatch said. "Sometimes the law is a a-s-s, you know."

Strom Thurmond, the ancient Dixiecrat, shrewdly drove the apology theme into the ground, exhausting synonyms for "contrite." He asked, "Now, as I understand, you admit you did wrong. Is that correct?"

"Yes."

"You're sorry you did wrong?"

"Absolutely."

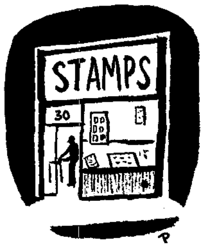
"You're repentant for doing wrong?"

"Yes, sir."

"You won't do it again?"

"You can be sure of that."

Alan Simpson, the author of the convoluted immigration law whose provision Baird had violated, wanted to support her, but, because of his special role, he could not. Instead, he delivered a fatalist's statement on the triumph of cynicism: "In this town, fact means nothing. It's all perception. And we've all been through that. No one of us in this panel hasn't been through that. And it's sometimes painful to see others go through that wringer, but that's the way the village operates."



Everyone was playing against type—the types they'd represented in the Thomas-Hill hearings. Baird uncannily resembled Hill. Both women were lawyers whose strengths were seen as weaknesses: their grace under pressure was translated as coldness. Yet if they had been emotional or indignant they would have been cast as hysterics. No one really knew Baird, but her manner, whatever it was, could be used against her. Her lack of political definition, except for her smooth professionalism, allowed Baird herself to be obscured by the easily understood tale of the nanny. In this trial, Baird could mount no defense.

The next morning, Baird sat on the platform at the Capitol as Bill Clinton was sworn in. His Inaugural Address might as well have been an ironic commentary on her predicament: "This beautiful capital, like every capital since the dawn of civilization, is often a place of intrigue and calculation. Powerful people maneuver for position and worry endlessly about who is in and who is out, who is up and who is down, forgetting those people whose toil and sweat sends us here and pays our way." Baird, who was being trampled in the maneuvers, was also the symbolic object of wrath from the masses.

Following the ceremony, the President was joined by the Congress for lunch inside the Capitol. As he finished his meal, he motioned to Biden, and Biden shook his hand and leaned in to his ear. "Mr. President, Bill," he said. "Look, I don't want to rain on your parade, but I know the following: within the next twenty-four hours, I'll be calling to tell you you'll have to go to the wall personally to save this woman, or you're going to have to pull her down." Clinton seemed startled, and left for his parade.

By the next morning, it was impossible to reach any of the Senate offices by phone. They were inundated by thousands of irate callers urging the defeat of Zoë Baird. Before the second day's hearing began, Biden pulled Lloyd Cutler, who was acting as Baird's counsel, into a back room and warned him, "This thing is in trouble." As the hearing proceeded, the pace of angry phone calls increased. Panic was seeping through the Senate.

At lunch, Biden spoke at the first meeting of the Democratic caucus of the new Congress. "This isn't going anywhere good," he told the members. But he pleaded with them to allow the President, in his first day in office, to "bring her down" himself. Senator Joseph Lieberman, of Connecticut, who had introduced Baird before the committee, spoke next. By way of making a defense, he enumerated her liabilities, claiming they could all be reasonably explained. But for those present the case seemed to be closed. "Pull the plug" became the overwhelming sentiment, according to one senator.

At the same time, Stephanopoulos was holding a press conference at the White House. Was Clinton preparing to withdraw Baird? "Not at this point," Stephanopoulos answered. "That's a hypothetical. Right now, Zoë Baird is his nominee." His feeble language weakened her remaining support. Five conservative Southern and Western Democrats who often vote in a bloc announced their opposition, seeming to take the lead in what was to everyone on the inside an inevitability. Senator Nancy Kassebaum, a moderate Republican from Kansas, also declared against Baird, closing off her last potential justification as a women's candidate.

Back at the hearing, Biden again spoke privately to Cutler: "If you stick in, I'm going to take this to the wall. I'm going to call every relevant witness, even get the Peruvians in here. You either kill it or I'm going to kill it. Get somebody up here and make a decision." As the afternoon session began, most of the Republicans on the committee were waiting for the Democrats, who were waiting for word from the White House. There was no need to torture Baird further. The questioning turned gentle. And Biden called frequent recesses, in the hope that a call would come from the President to finish the affair.

George Mitchell, the Senate Majority Leader, had begun the festive week believing that Baird could be defended and would be Attorney General. At three in the afternoon, Biden called Mitchell and learned that Mitchell had already received a call from Clinton, seeking advice. Mitchell wanted to wait to call back until the hearing was over. At six, Biden appeared in Mitchell's office. Together, they called the President and were told that he was in a meeting. Mitchell held the phone, but Biden spoke loudly: "George, tell him if the President doesn't call us in three minutes I'm going public!" About one minute later, Clinton was on the speakerphone, talking with both senators.

"I'm going to be blunt," Biden said. "There's no case here. Zero possibility."

"What are you telling me?" asked Clinton.

"You have no chance, even if you weigh in with everything."

"What do you recommend?"

The hearings were scheduled to run

another day, with Paul Gewirtz testifying. According to one of Baird's advisers, "Paul was going to say, 'I promised her I would take care of it completely; she had no idea that there were any delays; she never saw the documents; I assured her that it was being taken care of properly.' He just felt so bad."

"Bill, have you seen the movie 'The Natural'?" Biden asked. "The husband has to hit the lights out in the hearing room. It's going to have to go dark if she's going to have a chance. But they might knock the marriage out. Bill, you've got to take her down."

"I'd like to give her the chance to do that. I'll get back to you," he replied.

"When?" prodded Mitchell.

"Tonight."

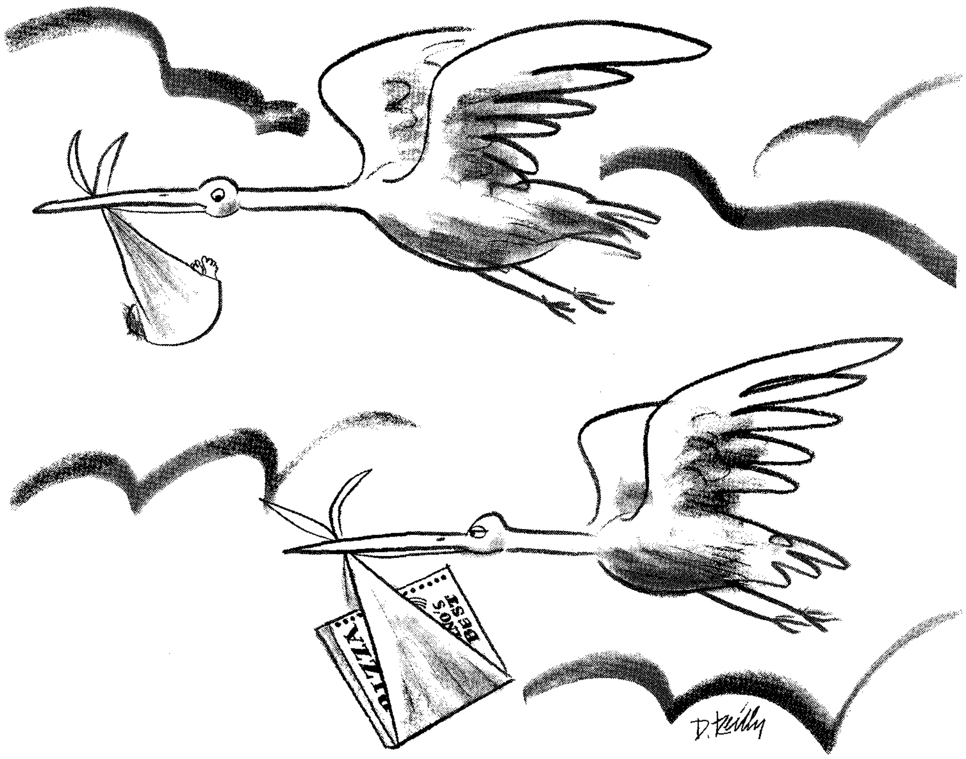
"When?"

Back at his office, at about ten-thirty that evening, Biden got a call from Howard Paster, the White House congressional liaison, telling him that Baird was with "someone she trusts." Baird was with Gewirtz, Cutler, Jordan, and Christopher, preparing a withdrawal statement. A few minutes later, Paster called again: "She's balking. You were all so nice to her that she thinks she's doing well. Will you talk to them?"

The phone rang again: it was Warren Christopher. Biden made his case, and Christopher, acting as the pluperfect attorney, computed the facts. "I think you're right," he said. "I appreciate it." Paster called again. The statement would be released soon. At about 1:30 A.M. on Friday, January 22nd, the White House gave the press two letters. In one, Baird withdrew. In the other, Clinton accepted her withdrawal "with sadness," taking "full responsibility."

Later that day, Clinton warmly received her in private at the White House.

Two weeks later, on February 4th, Administration officials leaked the news that Judge Kimba Wood, of the Federal District Court in New York, was the President's likely choice for Attorney General. Judge Wood, who is forty-nine, is married to the *Time* columnist Michael Kramer, and they have a young son. A White House aide assured the Washington *Post* that Wood had "no nanny problem." But within hours her nomination was said to have faltered. "Something has come up. We don't know what it is," said a Judiciary Committee source. Late on the afternoon of the fifth, the Associated Press issued a bulletin: "Federal Judge Kimba Wood, President Clinton's expected choice for Attorney General, withdrew her name Friday from consideration, saying her babysitter had been an illegal alien for seven years."



ZOË BAIRD was harmed by the honor bestowed on her. She strove to reach the top, and she did. She deferred to her mentors, who lifted her to a lofty position where they could not protect her. Her deference allowed her to be pushed to the point of rejection. Warren Christopher, in particular, lacked the political mastery to deal with a situation he could not foresee. Once the issue turned political and emotional, he was out of his depth. He played an important part again only by reassuming his lawyerly authority, advising his protégés, his clients, Baird and Clinton, to cut their losses. Like her sponsor, the networker had a keen feeling for corporate imperatives but not for a broader politics.

The public conflated her with her corporate clients, mistaking her professionalism for true belief. Her detachment was inexplicable. She didn't come from a place called Hope, but a place called Aetna. She found herself trapped on the wrong side of the divide of us-versus-them. Once the nominee to be Attorney General was discovered to have broken the law—any law—she may well have been finished. Whatever the technicalities and her knowledge—or lack of it—Baird had transgressed. No wise man could have saved her. Baird's intense professionalism was desiccating: it seemed to deprive her of a larger purpose, beyond good government. Her one-dimensional image made her easier to eliminate.

The Baird affair revealed Clinton just beginning to connect his synapses with those of Washington. It is a process more complex than replacing outmoded computers in the Old Executive Office Building and rewiring phone lines in the West Wing. Clinton acted initially as though Washington would run on automatic pilot, without his taking over the controls. He assumed the good faith of the machine that is Washington, a machine that is not fuelled by faith, good or bad. But the capital did not bend its contours to him naturally. And he had not yet learned how to mold the capital to the shape he sought. The American Reunion, for all its altruism, failed to account for the separation of powers. Congress can help the President extend executive power, but it is not one of his limbs. Despite Clinton's preliminary overtures to the capital, and his embraces, he stopped short of intimate knowledge. He trusted that to his wise man. The gates of antipolitics in the country, as happened with Bush's Presidency, were opened by a failure of politics at the center. ♦

LIFE AND LETTERS

THE SECRET WORLDS OF HENRY GREEN

Brought up in the noblest English tradition, the author Henry Green was impelled to sample life outside it, assuming a series of disguises that made him the most imaginative, and elusive, British writer of his generation. This year sees the reissue of Green's novels and memoir, and the publication of a new collection.

BY JEREMY TREGLOWN

DURING much of the nineteen-thirties and forties, a conventional-seeming upper-class English businessman sat in his office at lunchtime and at home in the evening and wrote. From a distance, this activity might have been mistaken for a hobby, because Henry Yorke was in some respects a familiar privileged type: Eton and Oxford, good at billiards and fishing, with a safe job in the family firm and an unquestioned place among the former Bright Young Things of post-First World War London. But he also stood far outside their world—among other reasons, because he was a businessman, and because of the unusual character of his writing. As an author, he called himself Henry Green. His pseudonym was one of many light disguises. At different times, he was a dandy, a factory laborer, a socialite, a husband and father, a lover, a fireman, a heavy drinker, a recluse. His strange, various, sad, lyrical, and comic novels opened up English prose like nobody else's. Most of them were new departures, both for the novelist and for fiction itself. Two were briefly best-sellers. Yet they have all been pretty much forgotten.

Now, at last, almost all his books are coming back into print. Laconic and expansive, their titles are typical of his manner. A 1978 Penguin compendium that includes "Living," "Loving," and "Party Going" is being reissued this month with John Updike's original introduction—still (along with an essay by Eudora Welty) among the best things yet written on Green's work. Another Penguin volume, containing "Blindness," "Nothing," and "Doting," reappears at the same time, with a new introduction by me. And, in May, Green's colorful and eccentric memoir of his early years, "Pack My Bag," will be published for the first time in the United States, by New Directions.

This flurry began last year in Britain—it included a well-researched BBC-TV documentary, "Trapped: The Story of Henry Green," directed by Roger Thompson—and from the publishers' point of view is partly a Great Books gamble. *Kirkus Reviews* recently asked "Who knows that it won't be Henry Green, not Joyce or Woolf, that history finally will favor as the greatest English prose-extender of the century?" It's a pity that this makes him sound like a kind of literary shoetree, because he does have a real claim to classic status—one that is furthered by the appearance this month of a volume from Viking, also introduced by John Updike, called "Surviving: The Uncollected Writings of Henry Green." Although mixed in quality, it includes a wonderful unfinished novella, "Mood"—first published in the quarterly *Grand Street*, last summer—and several short stories set in the Second World War, when, as Updike says, Green was "functioning at full tilt, bringing to the inferno of blitzed London a descriptive power of almost lurid virtuosity." There are also revealing juvenilia, dramatic sketches (including a comic TV play, commissioned in 1955 but never performed), radio talks, articles, and reviews.

Green lays on words with the experimental plasticity of a Post-Impressionist painter, yet his best work, although often wayward, scarcely ever seems self-absorbed. All the attention is to other people: people of any sort, regarded affectionately but unsentimentally, humorously, and without preconception. He was a man of puzzled feelings, and much of his power as an artist comes from the honesty with which he made his writing follow where his characters' emotions untidily led. "His real interest," V. S. Pritchett wrote in a *New Yorker* review in 1952, "is in the blurred, the lethargic, inarticulate part of human beings, the wound that becomes their quotidian poetry." It isn't enough to say, although it is true, that to read his novels is to enter unfamiliar minds and relationships—those of working people in a Birmingham factory, or servants in a country house in Ireland, or idle-rich partygoers in the embattled nineteen-thirties, or frivolous parents facing the disappointments of middle age and the perplexities of social change. What is rare about Henry Green is the mixture of immediacy and naïve awe which he makes his readers feel in these situations. As Updike has written, "It is as a child—an ideally attentive and unnoticed child—that we seem to be present during the below-stairs exchanges of 'Loving' and the factory scenes of 'Living.' These maidservants and workmen are seen with more than egalitarian generosity; they loom as figures of a luminous, simplifying grandeur."

The poetic bravura this implies could be lavish, and was always unpredictable. It partly stemmed from artificial pressures that Green imposed on his writing—tricks to which his devotion has been a little exaggerated, but which he used to force language into unexpected patterns and readers into fresh attentiveness. For instance, he tried minimizing the use of articles—"the," "a," "an"—or introducing imagery chosen for its apparent irrelevance. But if to call Green a prose poet suggests his intensity (as well as the considerable demands he can make on his readers' powers of interpretation and judgment), it misses how funny his books are—and how satirical, too, although without the moralizing that implies. He was as far from a scold as it is possible to be. On the contrary, once he had got people onto the page, in all their shiftless emotional muddle, he tried to find ways of putting a halo

PHOTOGRAPH BY CECIL BEATON, COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S LONDON

Henry Green photographed by Cecil Beaton in 1949.

around them. He didn't pretend away the disillusionments of modernism, but he gave it back his own kind of romance.

It is hard to pick out an example. Green's movements of thought and rhythm, more than those of almost any other writer, are intricately interdependent. (For this reason, he wouldn't allow extracts from his work to appear in magazines.) But take the last words of "Loving": "Over in England they were married and lived happily ever after." The happy couple are the butler and one of the underhousemaids in an English household in Ireland, during the Second World War. When they leave for England and marriage, Raunce, the butler, is ill; they are going to live under the nose of his mother, a possessive bully; Edith, his fiancée, is likely to be called up for war work; and they are abandoning the part-filched comforts of a grand house in neutral Ireland for suburban rationing and bombs. One of the reasons for Raunce's illness is his anxiety about having fiddled his employers' housekeeping accounts. Such a hero and such a situation are typical of Green's fiction. Typical, too, is the mixture of tones which conveys them:

> Edith laid her lovely head on Raunce's nearest shoulder and above them, above the great shadows laid by trees those white birds wheeled in a sky of eggshell blue and pink with a remote sound of applause as, circling, they clapped their stretched, starched wings in flight.
>
> That side of Edith's face open to the reflection of the sky was a deep red.
>
> "She passed my books all right this mornin'," he murmured.
>
> "What books?" she asked low and sleepy.
>
> "Me monthly accounts," he replied.
>
> "Did she?" Edith sighed content. . . .
>
> "You're wonderful," she said so low he hardly heard.

"Loving" first appeared in England in 1945. Its publication in the United States was delayed until the autumn of 1949, but then it was an instant success, as was his next book to come out here, "Nothing." When Green published "Doting," in 1952, he was still only forty-six and seemed at the height of his powers. Pritchett wrote in *The New Yorker*, "He has been the most curious imagination in the English novel during the last twenty years," and the poet Norman Nicholson told Green, "I count you among the very, very few contemporary writers of fiction to whose new work I look forward with continuing excitement." As it turned out, there was nothing much left to look forward to. Although Green lived for another twenty years, "Doting" was his last book.

At Eton and Oxford in the nineteen-twenties, he had been in the inner circle of a fashionable, dandyish group later romanticized in Evelyn Waugh's "Brideshead Revisited": Harold Acton, Brian Howard, Robert Byron, Cyril Connolly. Waugh joined the set at university, as did a few half-infatuated young dons, such as the classicist Maurice Bowra and, on the fringe, the literary historian and impresario of undergraduate drama Nevill Coghill. Shortly before he died, Coghill told me wryly, "I began as a Bright Young Thing, went on to become a damp squib, and ended up as a wet blanket." He was underestimating himself, but it was part of the pathos of that generation that its members knew how quickly the *son et lumière* might be over. In Green's case, the progression seems to have been nearly self-willed. He is a case history not only in

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THE MYSTERIOUS MAPS

I

There is a certain triviality in living here,
A lightness, a comic monotony that one tries
To undermine with shows of energy, a devotion

To the vagaries of desire, whereas over there
Is a seriousness, a stiff, inflexible gloom
That shrouds the disappearing soul, a weight

That shames our lightness. Just look
Across the river and you will discover
How unworthy you are as you describe what you see,

Which is bound by what is available.
On the other side, no one is looking this way.
They are committed to obstacles,

To the textures and levels of darkness,
To the tedious enactment of duration.
And they labor not for bread or love

But to perpetuate the balance between the past
And the future. They are the future as it
Extends itself, just as we are the past

Coming to terms with itself. Which is why
The napkins are pressed, and the cookies have come
On time, and why the glass of milk, looking so chic

In its whiteness, begs us to sip. None of this happens
Over there. Relief from anything is viewed
As timid, a sign of shallowness or worse.

II

Low shadows skim the earth, a few clouds bleed,
A couple of grazing cows carry the next world
On their backs, their hides the mysterious maps

Of the principal countries. Too bad the future
Is covered with flies, and sits in a pasture.
Here comes old age, dragging a tale of soft

Inconvenience, of golfing in Florida,
Of gumming bad food. These cows never stop chewing.
O love, how did we get here, so far from the coast

Of our friends, our nervous talkative friends,
Who are now reading in bed or watching TV
Because it is later there, and they must

Keep their minds off missing us, off whatever
Would happen were we to come back from our exile?
And the earth is almost dark, the crickets

Are clicking, the laundry is in the dryer,
The heat of the night is giving us new things
To wish for. Who cares if we were young once—

The young don't care, the old don't care,
So long as they are not left behind.

III

A long time has passed and yet it seems
Like yesterday, in the mid-most moment of summer,
When we felt the disappearance of sorrow,

And saw beyond the rough stone walls
The flesh of clouds, heavy with the scent
Of the southern desert, rise in a prodigal

Overflowing of mildness. It seems like yesterday
When we stood by the iron gate in the center
Of town while the pollen-filled breath

Of the wind drew the shadow of the clouds
Around us so that we could feel the force
Of our freedom while still the captives of dark.

And later when the rain fell and flooded the streets
And we heard the dripping on the porch and the wind
Rustling the leaves like paper—how to explain

Our happiness then, the particular way our voices
Erased all signs of the sorrow that had been,
Its violence, its terrible omens of the end?

—MARK STRAND

the divided personality of almost any artist—the novels both encoding and furtively divulging his most private thoughts and impulses—but also in a further split, between the man as writer and the man as managing director, of H. Pontifex & Sons, Ltd. However intricately disguised, much of Henry Green's fiction was at some recognizable level autobiographical. Yet a condition of his imaginative freedom was that he himself should remain essentially unknown: he wouldn't let his publishers distribute personal information about him, and famously turned his back on photographers. He has managed to perpetuate this reticence beyond his death: twenty years on, there still isn't a biography.

PONTIFEX, the family firm, still exists. Originally an eighteenth-century London coppersmithing company, it was bought by Henry's wealthy grandparents for his father, Vincent Yorke, on his marriage. There was a distant literary connection: Pontifex supplied William Blake with plates for his engravings. Some of the engravings hung in the office, near Marble Arch, in central London, where Green often wrote. Today, the company is based in Leeds, having moved there in 1959 when Henry's son, Sebastian Yorke, then in his mid-twenties, took over. In its quiet way, it is a dynastic affair. Father-son relationships are important to it. So is guarding the literary flame. Sebastian's own son, Matthew, offspring of a brief marriage to the novelist Emma Tennant, has recently joined the factory's small remaining work force. He published a well-received novel a couple of years ago, and it is he who edited his grandfather's miscellaneous and unpublished writings for "Surviving." Sebastian Yorke contributed a short, vivid personal memoir of his father, written in the intervals of running Pontifex during the harsh latest phase of Britain's industrial decline.

Henry Green's—or, rather, Henry Yorke's—work as an engineer prompted a minor obsession on his part during a visit he paid to the United States for the publication of "Loving." At a time when few people worried about such matters, he complained that American air-conditioning units were wasteful, "altogether wrong," because they didn't recycle the water they used. He knew what he was talking about. He was an official (soon to be chairman) of the British Chemical Plant Manufacturers' Association, and in the nineteen-thirties he had started his own chemical-engineering subsidiary of Pontifex, somewhat to the annoyance of his conservative and autocratic father. In the newly competitive world of the fifties, neither that nor any other part of the business was thriving, despite a brief postwar boom. But when Henry, having dropped out of Oxford, first entered the company on the shop floor, in 1927, it was prosperous. In those days, it principally made and installed brewing equipment and, to the little-concealed amusement of his friends, lavatories.

The factory was in Birmingham. Its serious, almost grand Victorian building—two wings with a central tower and portico—housed a hundred and fifty employees. Photographs show the young Henry wearing a boilersuit and a plump cloth cap, which accentuates the softness of his reticently averted face. He worked in every part of the business, including the iron foundry—"well known to be the hardest occupation in all the engineering trade," he wrote proudly, to Nevill Coghill, "& so [I] get more muscular every day." He lodged in a lower-middle-class household of three families and three single men:

> Just like Balzac. You ought to throw everything aside to read him: (you havent have you?) Its a harder but in many ways a finer life than I thought it would be. Some of the men are magnificent. The words they use even more so. . . .
>
> Trains for Oxford & London go through the garden of this house. If I spit on one it will be better than blowing kisses, more in keeping with Birmingham, safer from any suspicion of sentiment.

In any case, the kisses would have been less for Coghill than for Oxford and London. Henry Yorke, as his school friend the novelist Anthony Powell puts it, was "the least queer person you've ever met." At Eton, he says, Henry never showed the faintest sign of passion for other boys. Powell regards this as a reflection not of "normality" but of underlying narcissism—a judgment sharpened, perhaps, both by literary rivalry and by chagrin over Green's later avoidance of the people he called his "much hated old friends."

In the mean, unfamiliar streets of Birmingham, the twenty-one-year-old missed the elegance and companionship of a world from which, for his own strong reasons, he had temporarily, but not for the last time, withdrawn. Those reasons are more easily understood than many things about him. He had gone up to Oxford late, so was still in his second year when most of his school friends left. Unusually for the time, he read English, but he never got on with his tutor at Magdalen College, C. S. Lewis, about whose "rude and incompetent" efforts to teach him he wrote to his mother, with a mixture of snobbery, incomprehension of the tutorial system, and plain bluff. He told her, "Last time . . . was taken up entirely by a long list of questions as to what I had read of the vast tracts of stuff he made me read, when his job of course is to tell me about it," and went on to complain about "the futile life one leads here . . . . Everyone is rich and vapid or poor and vapid + one + all talk about Oxford day + night. . . . I should like to go on a lathe in Birmingham. But I don't mind. Anything to get away from here." He isn't the only student to have used attacks on the curriculum as a smoke screen for his own deficiencies. But like others of his generation and class—most famously, his Eton contemporary George Orwell—he was also unsettled by an intense curiosity about the lives of working people. He wanted to write about them, and this was more than a vague undergraduate ambition. Aged twenty, he had already published a novel, "Blindness." It is a *Künstlerroman.* Wandering around his family's country estate, the recently blinded adolescent hero, John Haye, worries about the toiling masses ("Blindness" has its touches of self-satire) and decides that for his art the future lies in the cities.

Going to Birmingham was a positive move, both for Green's general sense of purpose and for his writing, to which he applied himself in every spare moment. In his notebooks and his letters home he wrote fascinatedly about hair cream, racing pigeons, football matches, and babies. All this went into his next novel. But he was also running away—from intellectualism, from English as a "subject," and from the impending stare of the university examiners. Besides, like John Haye, he wanted to shake off the upper-class hunting-and-shooting milieu of his parents. His mother, Maud, was a Wyndham, brought up at Petworth, one of the finest English country houses. She and Vincent lived at his ancestral home, Forthampton Court, a splendid—if, by comparison, architecturally incoherent—pile set in twenty-five hundred acres of Gloucestershire. In "Pack My Bag" Green tells how Maud antagonized a gardener there by making him bowl mangel-wurzels for her to shoot at. His grandfather was a horseman but, in old age, was nervous of jumping; when out foxhunting, so family legend went, he always took along a servant armed with wire cutters and two axes, to cut through the fences.

Henry watched his elders closely, but, above all, he listened to them. Here, in a youthful fantasy-sketch, included in "Surviving," that anticipates the theatre of the absurd by thirty years, are the Wyndham family, confronting a giant who has appeared in the garden at Petworth:

> Mvy [Maud Yorke]: My dear Charles, how very exciting.
>
> (*Wickham* [the butler] *comes in.*)
>
> Charles [Maud's brother]: Wickham, if you go to the window you will see a giant by the monument. Send out to tell him to go away at once or I will have the police on him.
>
> Maggie: It is not Sunday.
>
> Wickham (*Having looked*): Very good my lord.
>
> (*Goes out.*) . . .
>
> (*Alfred comes in.*)
>
> Charles: Alfred go and find Ball and tell him to take the hounds away at once, anywhere away from the Park.
>
> Tiny: Above all we must keep calm.
>
> Mvy: What would the parent have said?
>
> Charles (*Labouring under a sense of injustice*): He would have been very angry and I don't think anyone in the kingdom would have denied him the right to be. . . .
>
> Humphrey: Charles, Wickham has been precipitated into the lake.
>
> Charles: Wickham was a good servant.

The Yorkes were in their way no less daunting than the Wyndhams. Descended remotely from the Earls of Hardwicke on one side, and more immediately from the Dutch Baron Vincent de Tuyll de Serooskerken on the other, Henry's father was both a successful businessman, on the boards of several City companies, including the Westminster Bank, and a classicist, a Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. Family legend has it that he read Homer in the original as a young child and continued to do so at bedtime throughout his adult life. "Vincent Yorke had a donnish manner and little small talk; there was also a bullying side to his nature," Sebastian Yorke recalls. Maud was a distant mother. The couple had three children, all sons. Philip, the brilliant eldest, died at sixteen, of lymphatic leukemia. The talented and difficult Gerald—later, a devotee of black magic and a protégé of Aleister Crowley—became the heir. (Forthampton now belongs to his son.)

In the school magazine, Henry Yorke first appeared as Henry Michaels, and he later fancified that to Henry Michaelis. On the typescript of "Blindness," the

"Dr. Stolner says it might be nice if I let you see my dark side."

• •

author was at first given as Henry Browne. In the finished novel, the central character insists on calling his girlfriend June, though her name is Joan—one of many obsessional misidentifications in Green's fiction. As far as his own pseudonyms are concerned, aristocratic self-distancing may have been part of it: the upper classes still snobbed authorship, and in many ways Henry was loyal to his origins. (He once corrected an interviewer with "You mustn't call me upper-middle-class—you'll upset my mother. I'm an aristocrat.") But his onomatophobia went deeper. Friends recall how hard it was to reconcile Henry Green's daring, psychologically wayward novels with the utter conformism of Henry Yorke's outward behavior, expressed both in his appearance—dark office suit, neat barbering—and in his nervousness of social opinion.

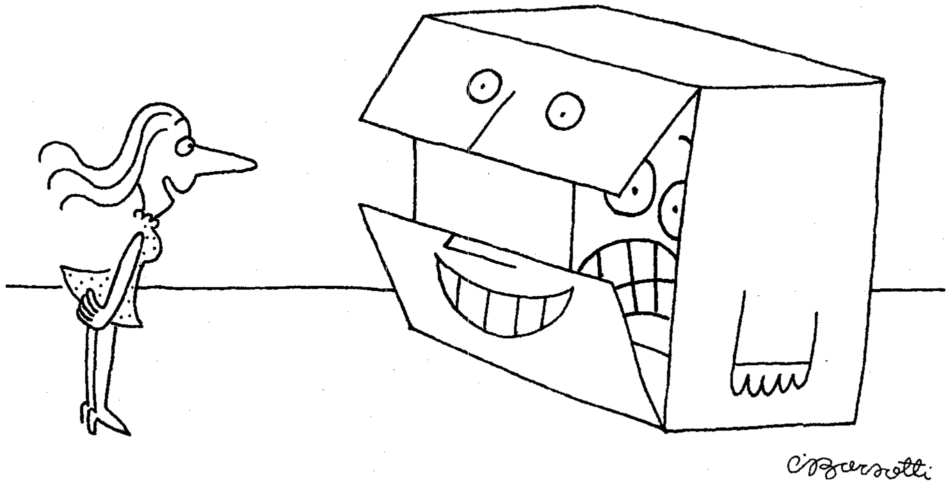
His reserve both revealed and contributed to an underlying loneliness and self-dislike. At different times, he described himself as fat, stupid, cowardly. One of his notebooks begins simply, "I hate my face." After his protective elder brother, Gerald, left Eton for Cambridge, Henry wrote, "Loneliness began for me now fierce, desperate, taking on an importance out of all proportion." It was around then that he began inventing stories: at first about himself—he would "lie outrageously when in the company of strangers," he wrote in "Pack My Bag"—and later about others, about people, real or imaginary but preferably from outside his own claustrophobic social world, with whom he sought a shy kind of love. "Prose," he said when he was older, in one of his best-known phrases, "should be a long intimacy between strangers."

Both as a boy and later, Henry often felt less at home with his intimidating parents than with their servants and employees. In a ménage as hierarchical as Forthampton Court, social exclusion worked both ways. For someone of his sensitivity, to be allowed into lower-class life meant a huge amount. Once, when he was an undergraduate spending a week at Forthampton on his own, he wrote to Nevill Coghill:

> The servants invited me down to their room last night to listen to a diver [on the radio] talking from under the Thames. As the head housemaid put it, "After all a thing like this doesn't happen every day." There was quite a crowd of people there, a sort of reception on Sat. night! You cant imagine what a compliment it is to be invited.

The indoor staff at Forthampton consisted of a butler, two footmen, a hallboy, a cook, a kitchenmaid, a scullery maid, five housemaids, and the personal maid of Mrs. Yorke. Sebastian Yorke has told me about a conversation he had with one of the footmen, named George, about his life in the household. There is a photograph of George in elaborate livery bearing the family crest—"smothered with the leopard's head," as he put it, "the leopard's head was everywhere." For all this opulence, he remembered Henry's father as having been "a bit on the tight side": when Vincent Yorke left a letter in the hall for posting, he put a stamp with it, so that the butler couldn't fiddle the accounts. "He wasn't chancin' that, for [the butler] to put it down in his book what he thought," George said. (Like many others, this detail found its way into Henry Green's fiction, in the petty financial chicanery of Raunce, in "Loving.") George remembered the young Henry well: "Very studious! He loved to go to the cinema. He was quiet but he had a damned good noisy laugh."

It was a gregarious, highly ritualized existence. The family picture albums are filled with house parties: an alphabet of mansions—Arundel, Burleigh, Cirencester Park—rectangular limousines with the spare wheel above the running board, men with bushy mustaches and sleeked-down hair, women in long silk



"Oh, Stanford, I'm touched. Trust is *such* *an important first step."*

• •

gloves and even longer strings of pearls. Nancy Mitford appears often in these pictures, as do the dangerous-looking identical Ruthven twins, "A." and "P." So, more solemnly, do King George V and Queen Mary, flanked by strong-faced lords, and ladies covered in feathers. They are all off to the races or to a hunt ball.

Henry preferred going to the movies, or to a soccer match: in Birmingham, he became a dedicated Aston Villa fan. But he was also avidly interested in girls. He had written to Nevill Coghill, "I am waiting in hope for someone to rub her golden tissue slipper & open work stockings against my ankle as it rests by the champagne bucket, & the band with the saxophone creating stars & a sky & the starry sky feeling in one's inside." He didn't have long to wait. The Honourable Adelaide (Dig) Biddulph was a society beauty, a daughter of country neighbors of the Yorkes': tall, conventional, cheerful, completely at home in the picture-album world. Dig's main gifts were for clothes and interior decoration. She was skilled, too, at closing her mind to any unpleasantness.

With the possible exception of Anthony Powell, who had been passed over, everyone was delighted when the engagement was announced. A little surprised, also, because to some eyes Henry always seemed keener on Dig's younger sister, Mary, or Miss. Characteristically, Henry himself attributed the romance's blossoming to the distance—in every sense—between Gloucestershire and Birmingham. He fell in love, he said, "through the medium of a long exchange of letters." On the Biddulphs' side, Dig's fiancé was eyed warily by her parents' butler, Reginald Hawkes. In the BBC documentary, Hawkes called Henry's manner a "misquerade." Intentionally or not, it sounds appropriately like a cross between a piece of mischief and a performance. "He was always trying to misquerade behind some other celebrity," Hawkes said. "In his impersonation of other people, that was where he more or less made himself felt. Otherwise no one noticed Henry Yorke."

SECURELY married, and still only twenty-four, Henry now left the Birmingham factory, where he had been working for two years, and based himself in Pontifex's London office, in George Street, W1. At first, the couple lived a short distance away, in Radnor Place, but after a few years they moved across Hyde Park to a large house in Knightsbridge. For the rest of their lives, they remained among the comfortable terraces between Buckingham Palace and the Albert Hall. Their one child, Sebastian, was born in 1934. Dig's friend the Duchess of York (who two years later, on the abdication of her brother-in-law Edward VIII, became Queen) was one of his godparents; Henry's friend Maurice Bowra, the sociable Oxford don, was another.

Every day, Henry went to work: usually at George Street, although once a fortnight he travelled to the Birmingham factory and spent a couple of days there. He seems to have been torn between wanting to please his father and wanting to do something on his own initiative which might earn Vincent's respect. Vincent's control of Pontifex was absolute, and he frustrated his son's ambitions wherever he could. So, at least, it seemed to Henry.

Vincent's instinct may not have been all that wrong. His son was no budding tycoon. The company had acquired the patent on a device for filling beer bottles rapidly under pressure. In those pre-merger days, almost every town in England had its independent brewery, and almost every brewery used a Pontifex filling machine. Had Henry been more farsighted (or more competitive), he would have realized that the next step would inevitably be a machine that could fill more bottles at a time. If Pontifex didn't produce one, its competitors would (and eventually did). But, in his anxiety to move out of his father's shadow, he turned in a different direction, bringing a couple of chemical engineers into the business and acquiring a subsidiary, Bennett Sons & Shears, Ltd. Soon it was trading in Russia, and in 1938 Henry was a member of a trade delegation to Moscow. Meeting him at parties, though, few people took this side of his life seriously. He was having too much fun, and, for a time, seemed content to have rejoined his generation. Evelyn Waugh called Henry and Dig "the bright young Yorkes."

There was more than a touch of envy in Waugh's relationship with him. In 1929, he had written to Henry teasingly, "When you are married will your father make you head of all his factories and will you still be poor?" (Waugh, of course, was struggling to earn his living as a writer.) Anthony Powell felt a similar resentment. He tells a story that Henry flirted with the idea of giving up the business and managing on his private income of fifteen hundred pounds a year, so as to concentrate on his writing. Sebastian Yorke thinks the figure improbably high (in today's terms, it would be worth, say, seventy thousand dollars). Whatever the sum, to Powell it represented a luxurious degree of security.

The most galling thing was the freedom of Henry Green's writing. He owed nothing to the literary marketplace. Not everyone admired his factory novel, "Living," and Harold Acton was particularly satirical about it. To Waugh, Powell, and others, however, it was obvious that in what was only his second novel Green had done something of lasting originality. Published in 1929, “Living” was prophetic of the mood of the coming decade. Christopher Isherwood called it “the best proletarian novel ever written”—a compliment that the author himself downplayed. “I don't know that he ever worked in a factory,” Green said, and recalled with glum relish the contrasting verdict of a loam-molder at Pontifex: “I didn't think much of it, Henry.”

He had pushed his experimentation hard in this book: partly in the speech of a region and a class, and also as a narrator. He made notes on the language of the people he lived and worked with in Birmingham, but strict accuracy wasn't his main aim. He was interested in more abstract effects and wanted to write “in a very condensed kind of way in short paragraphs, hardly ever much longer than one and a half to two printed pages & often very much shorter.” Much has been made of the stylistic influence of a writer he admired, the Victorian Arabist Charles M. Doughty. There was another, more accessible source. “Living,” Green said at the time, was “a kind of very disconnected cinema film.”

As always, the main purpose of these exercises was to bring him closer to his characters. To Green, the cinema, like a soccer ground, was a place of physical intimacy: “every head . . . tumbled without hats against another, leaning everywhere.” It is this which makes his treatment of working-class characters so free of affectation—this, and the fact that he wasn't concerned with scoring political points. While he could write high-society comedy every bit as sharply as Powell, and about working-class life at least as sympathetically as Orwell, he mistrusted the divisive approach to class which both writers, from opposite standpoints, relied on. And, in being intuitive, instinctive, anti-intellectual, he was arguably more like D. H. Lawrence—although, as Updike put it, “whereas Lawrence escaped from the working class, Green escaped into it.” One of the reasons he wanted to leave Oxford, he told Coghill, was that people there “become too intellectual, they lose their *feeling*.”

WHAT with business, marriage, social life, and the conservatism of editors, Green published nothing for ten years after “Living.” He ended his silence on the eve of the Second World War. “Party Going” had been rejected by Dent's, but in 1939 it found a fervent admirer in John Lehmann, who had recently joined Virginia and Leonard Woolf at the Hogarth Press.

“Party Going” depicts a world of cocktails and impulsiveness, as if saying goodbye to it. A group of rich, frivolous young men and women—it might be the Yorkes' friends Aly Khan and Peggy Harmsworth and their crowd—wait in a hotel suite for the fog to clear so that they can whiz across to France, while working Londoners crowd the railway platform below.

The novel continues the atmosphere of Green's unfinished story, “Mood,” which had occupied him intermittently since he completed “Blindness.” “Mood” is about a rich young woman in London in the heat of summer, dreaming her life. Once again, quotation isn't easy, but the opening gives some sense of the piece. If Yeats' romanticism is here, and Virginia Woolf's ventriloquism, and Saki's comic irony, there are no exact comparisons for the encephalograph that Henry Green so lightly draws of his characters' thoughts. Here is Constance:

> *She walks down Oxford Street.*
>
> When she heard that high, loud, educated voice she saw the Blue Train where it was so much in evidence, then the boat where was no sound of it throughout the crossing, and the English Pullman where again it triumphed, crying: My dear I went to sleep before the boat started and didn't wake up till my maid told me we were in. My dear, that same voice said, what people want is to lie naked in the sun and that drives everyone further south to where it's all unknown. There was that same kind of voice, here in Oxford Street, this time proclaiming: The most lovely sponge. She looked and there was that same kind of woman coming out of a shop.—A most lovely sponge which—and then several buses cut short its price and the story of how that sponge was bought. She wondered where that woman bought her sponges. One shouldn't go just anywhere for one's sponge. For what is a sponge,—and this she felt but did not think. Why it is picked from the sea, it is cleaned and dried, perhaps a lot of things are done to it perhaps nothing very much. Perhaps a little salt is left in it. Here she sailed.

The narrative stands at a quizzical

“The trick, as I see it, is to insulate yourself with layers of deadwood.”

"I've always felt that my role as a beaver transcends any political changes at E.P.A."

distance from Constance's free association, yet it loves her as the ticket collector loves her when he finds her sitting in one of his deck chairs in Hyde Park:

> Constance opened her bag to look for her purse. . . . Standing above her he held the ticket in his fingers and Lord love us he *thought if women don't put a lot in there.* But he found his eyes followed the line of her left hand which held the bag while she fumbled in it with her right, and if, *automatically almost,* he kept exclaiming within him at the magnificence of that blue cigarette case and God help us look at that holder, yet the major part of him yearned to an exquisite transparency, like a seashell in the sea, where her thumb branched off from the palm of her hand. Save us, he cried out in his heart, if I couldn't bury my nose in there.

That last, ludicrously true impulse is typical of Green's art of bathos: he knew how romance can spring from its seeming opposite (he once phoned Eudora Welty and said, "Why not come over? I have a toothache"). For most of the men in his novels, no instinct is stronger than getting close to a woman—physically, but, almost more, chasing an emotional wholeness both inexhaustibly desirable and ridiculously illusory. The illusion is mutual. In his novel "Caught" (set in the London blitz) Green calls it "a daze of giving." Perhaps the daze was as important to him as the giving.

The Yorkes had their first glimpses of the Second World War before it began, and from what was to be a neutral country. They often went to Ireland, to fish or to stay with friends, and it is clear from their gossipy letters that the country intensified Henry's pleasure in failure—"every lake with its suicide," he said—and anarchy. They were always bumping into people who weren't supposed to be there at the time: Bertrand Russell with "his new girl"; Lady Dunn "on a joyride with an Irish major"; Lord Moyne caught alone with a woman friend when his yacht sank off the Galway coast. There was sometimes a faint political aspect to these dislocations. Shortly before war broke out, wanting to hear Prime Minister Chamberlain on the radio, the Yorkes approached the manager of their hotel in Cork, who was the only person with a radio set. He at first refused, because the broadcast clashed with a boxing match involving the Irish heavyweight Jack Doyle. Later, though, he invited Henry in, alone, to join a whiskey-drunk crowd around the crackling radio. Hoping to hear the fight, they had tuned in by mistake to "wild deadly cheering and applause" from a Nazi rally in Berlin, and didn't at first notice the difference. The episode was a pre-echo of Green's war fictions, in which people are often found in the wrong places, caring about the wrong things.

Elizabeth Bowen called the blitz a time of unmarriedness. Couples were separated, and everybody seemed to want to be with someone new. Henry Green was in the Auxiliary Fire Service, which for a while was thought almost as dangerous as being a fighter pilot. He had enlisted well before war was declared, partly to escape being called up for the Army, partly out of his instinctive longing to submerge himself among people with no special sense of their importance. In this, he resembled a man who had become one of his best friends, and who was lodging at the Yorkes' house in Knightsbridge. The clever and reckless Goronwy Rees had volunteered for the widely mocked Territorial Army and had begun the war in the cookhouse under the protection of a punch-drunk exboxer. Rees was a Fellow of All Souls, a novelist and a *Spectator* journalist, socialist in his sympathies, a charmer, and a close friend of Guy Burgess, who tried, perhaps with more success than Rees later admitted, to recruit him into the Comintern.

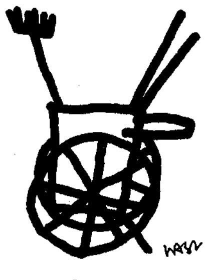
Dig Yorke spent much of her time in Bedfordshire with the five-year-old Sebastian, at the home of friends. Vincent retired to Forthampton Court for the duration. Henry found that a fireman's alternation of hectic activity with long periods when there was little to do enabled him both to keep a vague eye on Pontifex and to write. Business was slow. While similar firms were caught up in war work, Pontifex had somehow been left behind. It was another downward turning point in the firm's fortunes. Vincent, perhaps, was now too old, and his son too much otherwise occupied, to think about new commercial opportunities. Instead, Henry managed to write some of the most original and evocative books the period produced from any writer: the Fire Service novel, "Caught" (1943); "Loving" (1945), set in Ireland; and "Back" (1946), about the return home of an ex-prisoner of war, bereaved and deranged.

He also found plenty of time for his women friends. They were many. Whenever he gave the Hogarth Press a list of people to whom copies of his latest novel should be sent, it included two or three men—typically, Evelyn Waugh, Goronwy Rees, Maurice Bowra—and his mother and wife; the remaining six or eight were always other women. Among them were Pauline Gates, the wife of a banker friend; Dig's sister; and Mary Keene, a gifted, turbulent Cockney blonde who had lost a foot in a childhood accident, was married to a film director, and whose lovers included the painter Matthew Smith and probably the poet Louis MacNeice. Another close friend was Poppet Pol, daughter of the artist Augustus John. In the BBC film, one woman recalls that she and her friends assumed that they might at any time be killed by a bomb. They would ask each other, "Who are you going out with tonight, darling? Is it someone you want to die with?" No one minded the thought of dying with Henry.

Any one of Henry's romances "could sort of kick-start a novel," according to his son. But what did it do for the woman? There were the obvious attractions: his dark good looks; his teasing, fantastic wit. More than that, there was the simultaneously exotic and reassuring mixture of artist and aristocrat, bohemian and businessman. Then again, he really liked women—liked them and needed them. Mary Keene later told her daughter that without them Henry "didn't really exist. There was a hole there. He only existed in other people."

Loneliness—despair, even—was clearly audible in his work. In "Caught," Richard Roe buys favor from his colleagues, pimps for them, spreads gossip about them. Even his courage in the blitz is motivated by fear of being thought incompetent. And the overpromoted regular fireman with whom his story is entangled is a walking nightmare of sexual confusion and inadequacy, who is finally driven to suicide. By the time Green wrote "Back," the dominant notes have become the violence of disappointment, confused identity, loss of memory, obsession. In "Nothing" and "Doting" he transformed such miseries into farce, but not before he had written "Concluding" (1948), which he originally entitled "Dying," and whose central character is a retired scientist, deaf, paranoid, forgetful, who lives in a girls' school but whose closest companions are his goose, pig, and cat. There is a passage in that book, extravagant even by Henry Green's standards, in which a woman turns to her lover, "and helped his heart find hers by fastening her mouth on his as though she were an octopus that had lost its arms to the propellers of a tug, and had only its mouth now with which, in a world of the hunted, to hang onto wrecked spars."

Green himself felt increasingly hunted. Some of the reasons must wait for the searches and guesses of a full biography, but they can be seen in outline. Once the main German bombing offensive had ended, by the summer of 1941, the excitement of the Fire Service quickly wore off. For Green, there was a legacy: the blitz may have worsened the deafness from which he now suffered, and which has been used to explain his later isolation and fictional silence. Deafness, like blindness, can be a metaphor, of course, but in a 1962 TV interview the inclination of his anxious, watchful, slightly irritable face, left side turned forward, looks literal enough. He often said that he missed being able to overhear conversations in pubs, but he also liked to use the impediment for comic effect. When the novelist Terry Southern, interviewing Green for *The Paris Review*, used the word "subtle," Green pretended to hear "suttee," and debated whether, on his death, he could realistically expect even a wife as long-suffering as Dig to commit ritual self-immolation. "I'm sorry," Southern interrupted, "you misheard me. I said, 'subtle.' " "Oh, subtle," Green replied. "How dull!"



He had a number of worries. Business was in its wartime slump, and taxes were high. At home, his routines were broken by a move from the big house on Rutland Gate, which had been weakened by bombing, to a much smaller one, on Trevor Place, close by. The choice was affected by financial considerations—everyone knew that after the war things would not be easy for the rich—but there seems to have been more than this behind the household's sudden constriction. Sebastian, who was eight years old, thenceforth spent much of his time at Forthampton Court, with his grandparents, when he wasn't away at school. He makes the best of the evidently painful memory of his exclusion. His parents' move was "laughable, and in a way rather selfish as well," he says. "But I suppose it was rather nice for them. I mean, it was all right for a couple." In an article Green wrote later for *Esquire*, there is a hint of what his own feelings may have been. "A man falls in love because there is something wrong with him. . . . He gets so that he can't stand being alone. He may imagine he wants children, but he doesn't. . . . Because once married and with children of his own, he longs to be alone again."

Green was also often in turmoil about his writing. "There are times I'm insane," he told John Lehmann soon after the publication of "Caught." When Lehmann and his sister Rosamond expressed reservations about "Back," he responded furiously, and afterward apologized in a letter in which he spoke of "persecution mania" concerning his work. He wrote his novels, he told Lehmann, with "great agony of mind."

Having written them in agony, he sold them with the deepest hesitancy and suspicion. His dealings with publishers—especially American ones—were generally self-destructive. Because he was a businessman, he believed that he was the best person to handle his own publishing affairs. But he was so cautious, so concerned not to be thought casual about money, and—naturally—so vulnerable about his books that he became pathologically indecisive, and when he did make decisions they tended to be bad ones. He would suddenly insist on handling foreign rights that had earlier been assigned to the Hogarth Press, producing confusion, frustration, and inaction in a firm not known, in any case, for commercial dynamism. He would reject perfectly good offers of American deals, or would procrastinate until they were withdrawn.

When, in 1946, Dial Press made a firm offer for "Loving," on condition that he promise them his next two books, he replied that he didn't want to be tied down. And when Random House wrote to him soon afterward asking if he would arrange for copies of all his novels to be sent to New York, he huffily responded with the addresses of two London bookshops. As a result, his success in this country was delayed until five years after "Loving" first appeared in Britain—too late to counteract what had become a near-crushing disappointment about his literary fortunes. "The slog for recognition goes on too long," he had written in 1948 to a friend who was the editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, "& the work is too hard to allow any response beyond a continuing self pity."

In the early nineteen-fifties, the first volumes of Anthony Powell's "A Dance to the Music of Time" appeared. One of the most memorable characters is Charles Stringham. Witty and attractive, he leaves Oxford early in order to go into business but becomes increasingly drunken and chaotic. Stringham is like many people, of course, and in several ways is unlike Henry Green. Powell himself denies any connection. But some readers believed that Stringham "was" Henry Yorke—including, Powell says, Henry himself. At the George Street office, according to a member of the Pontifex staff, a bottle of gin was brought to him on a tray as soon as he arrived, at ten in the morning. On visits to the factories, there would always be a case of beer for him. He spent his lunchtimes and the later part of every evening in the pub. As the years passed, he couldn't always get himself to bed at night.

Not only the quantity of his drinking drew comment but—more, if anything—the spectacular physical deterioration that now began to go with it. "He looked ghastly," Evelyn Waugh wrote to Nancy Mitford in the spring of 1951, after the Yorkes spent a weekend at the Waughs' house in Gloucestershire. "Very long black dirty hair, one brown tooth, pallid puffy face, trembling hands, stone deaf, smoking continuously throughout meals, picking up books in the middle of conversations & falling into maniac giggles, drinking a lot of raw spirits, hating the country & everything good. . . . I really think Henry will be locked up soon." Waugh liked to exaggerate, and was jealous of Green's recent successes. But his decline gradually became obvious to all his friends, and many were hurt by the way he was beginning to cut himself off from them.

Not that he ever lost the power to charm, to amuse, or to attract sympathy. The poet Alan Ross describes how persistently he drew women out, "demanding revelations, indiscreet gossip, accounts of disaster." One male friend to whom he stayed close was the hedonistic Goronwy Rees. Rees had finished the war as a colonel in the British military government in Germany. When he returned to England, in 1946, Green brought him onto the board of Pontifex, somewhat to the alarm of its other members. If his appointment seemed at the time like a charitable stroke of eccentricity on Green's part, it aroused darker suspicions when Rees's close friend Guy Burgess defected to Moscow with Donald Maclean, in 1951. Pontifex, it was remembered, had done business in Russia. Anthony Powell speculated that Rees had talked himself into the company to use it as a cover for secret activities, whether on Burgess's behalf or as a treble agent, working for MI5. Powell says that Green was interrogated by the security services, and suggests—"this is purely my theory"—that his subsequent block may in some way have been related to these traumatic events.

Even by the standards of the British obsession with spies, the notion seems farfetched, but it conveys something of the curiosity that surrounded Henry Green in the nineteen-fifties. Dig, meanwhile, carried on serenely. She always behaved as if she noticed neither Henry's women nor his drinking. You don't have to be a literalist to find a suggestion in one of the "Surviving" fragments, "The Great I Eye," of what this behavior might privately have entailed. A man wakes up with a hangover, fully dressed. His wife brings him a cup of tea:

> She placed it smack on a bedside table next to the telephone. She seemed to take care not to look at him.
>
> He called her darling. In reply she said he had been too drunk last night, and waited, eyes averted. He said he knew. She went out. Careful of his head he then leant down and switched his telephone on. Now let the bad news come, he thought.

When it comes, the bad news is a

MAILBOX

To the Editor:

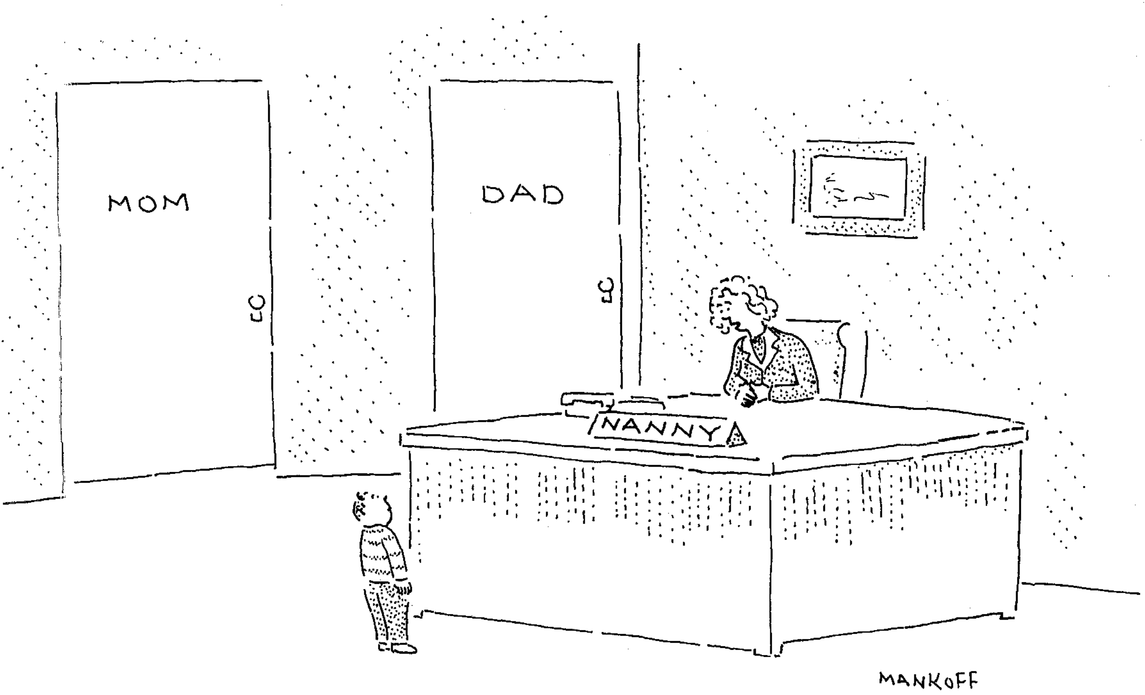
In her short story "Friend of the Family" (January 25th) Katharine Weber commits an error in food terminology which I consider unfortunate.

In the opening paragraph, she writes with some contempt of a gentleman with whom she dined. She speaks of a dish called truite au bleu, which I sampled often when I was a student in Switzerland more than forty years ago. She asks rhetorically, "Do you know they boil them alive?" and there she is wholly correct. What is *not* correct is her description of the dish as "a trout with its tail in its mouth."

That dish is not truite au bleu but, in French, *merlan en colère*, or "whiting in anger." It is prepared by twisting the fish into a circle and tying or otherwise securing the tail in its mouth. It is then deep-fried (not boiled) and served with parsley, lemon, and tartar sauce. When it is served hot, it has a distinctly choleric, or irascible, appearance.

When truite au bleu is served, it, too, has a circular appearance, but it does not have its tail in its mouth. The dish is prepared by eviscerating, or cleaning, the fish the moment it is tossed into a kettle of boiling water plus a trace of vinegar. When it is tossed into the kettle, the water destroys its nervous system, and it curls naturally. The vinegar gives the fish its blue color. It is generally served with a hollandaise sauce.

CRAIG CLAIBORNE
East Hampton, N.Y.



"They can't see you right now—would you like a bottle while you're waiting?"

mixture of reports of his flirtations the night before, and a half-waking dream in which a parcel arrives and he opens it under his wife's gaze, "to find bedded in tulle a pair of pink rubber false breasts."

Among friends, Dig would refer optimistically to problems such as Henry's having been "overtired," or his suffering from "stomach trouble"—protective fictions that, whether or not they were ultimately to her husband's benefit, allowed Henry and Dig to continue finding moments of considerable happiness together. She kept up with her own old friends but also liked some of his new ones. After Terry Southern and his then-wife, Carol, got to know Henry and Dig in 1956, the two couples became close, staying in each other's homes (the Southerns then lived in Geneva) and spending a holiday together near Barcelona.

Carol Southern found Henry "an absolutely heartbreaking person." Her husband had been a fan for some time: according to Carol, Terry's first words to her on their first date were "Do you like Henry Green?" In 1956, he sent Green a copy of "Flash and Filigree," which he had written as a homage (so much of one that Evelyn Waugh fantasized to Anthony Powell that " 'Terry Southern' is a pseudonym of Henry's"). Green helped the book to find a British publisher, and reviewed it enthusiastically in the *Observer* in 1958.

Green had more than once helped other writers, where he could. He reviewed little but always generously, and, from his earliest days as a novelist, proselytized for some whom he admired. In the nineteen-thirties, he wearied Lady Ottoline Morrell and other possible patrons with his efforts on behalf of the Dublin-born ex-sailor, ex-railway-storeman, and experimental novelist James Hanley. And one of his reasons for hiring Goronwy Rees may have been simply that Rees was a writer, now married and with children but no money. Rees wrote his best novel, "Where No Wounds Were," while he was on the payroll of Pontifex.

It would be a mistake, though, to overstress these impulses on Green's part, just as it is wrong to think of him (on the evidence of "Living") as having been a closet socialist. Green lived as he thought—obliquely, through intuition and indirection. At a flamenco dance in Spain, he told Carol Southern, "Don't watch the main event, watch the people." If he had been better organized, whether in his thoughts, his relationships, or his running of the family business, he would not have been the writer he was. "Living one's own life can be a great muddle, but the great writers do not make it plain," he insisted. "They palliate, and put the whole in a sort of proportion. Which helps; and on the whole, year after year, help is what one needs."

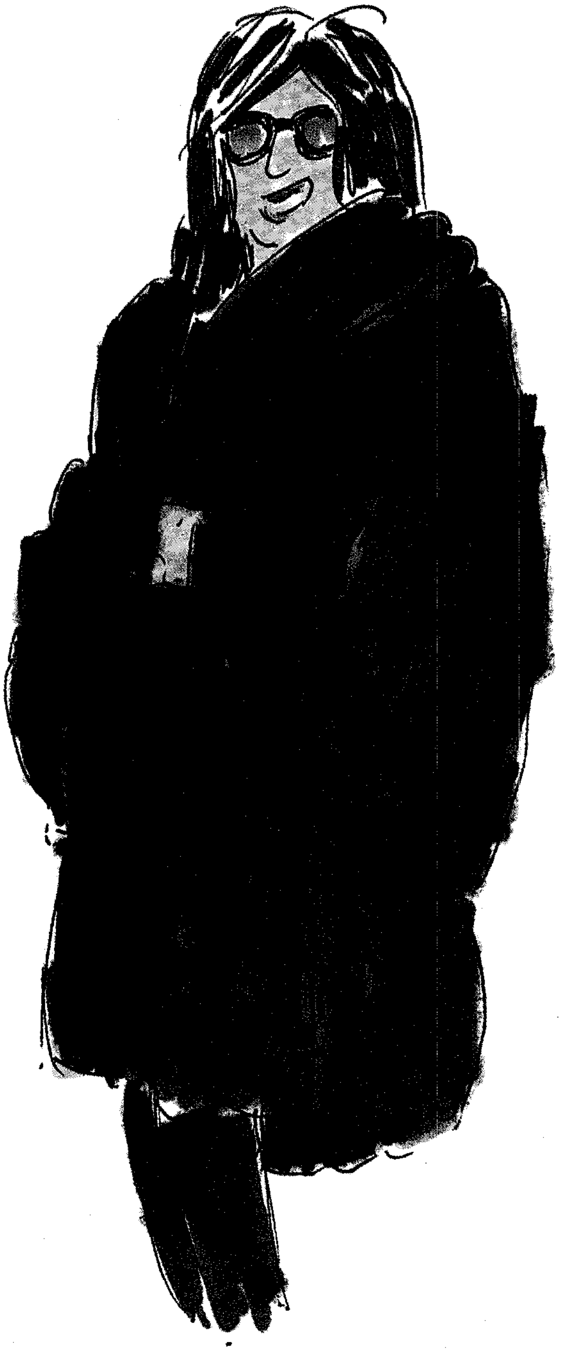
THAT was in 1961, twelve years before he died. As time went by, he rarely left the house. Goronwy Rees's daughter Jenny came regularly to take dictation, but he mostly talked to her about his cat. "Love your wife, love your cat and stay perfectly quiet, if possible not to leave the house," he told her to write, for the last piece he published. "Because on the street if you are sixty danger threatens."

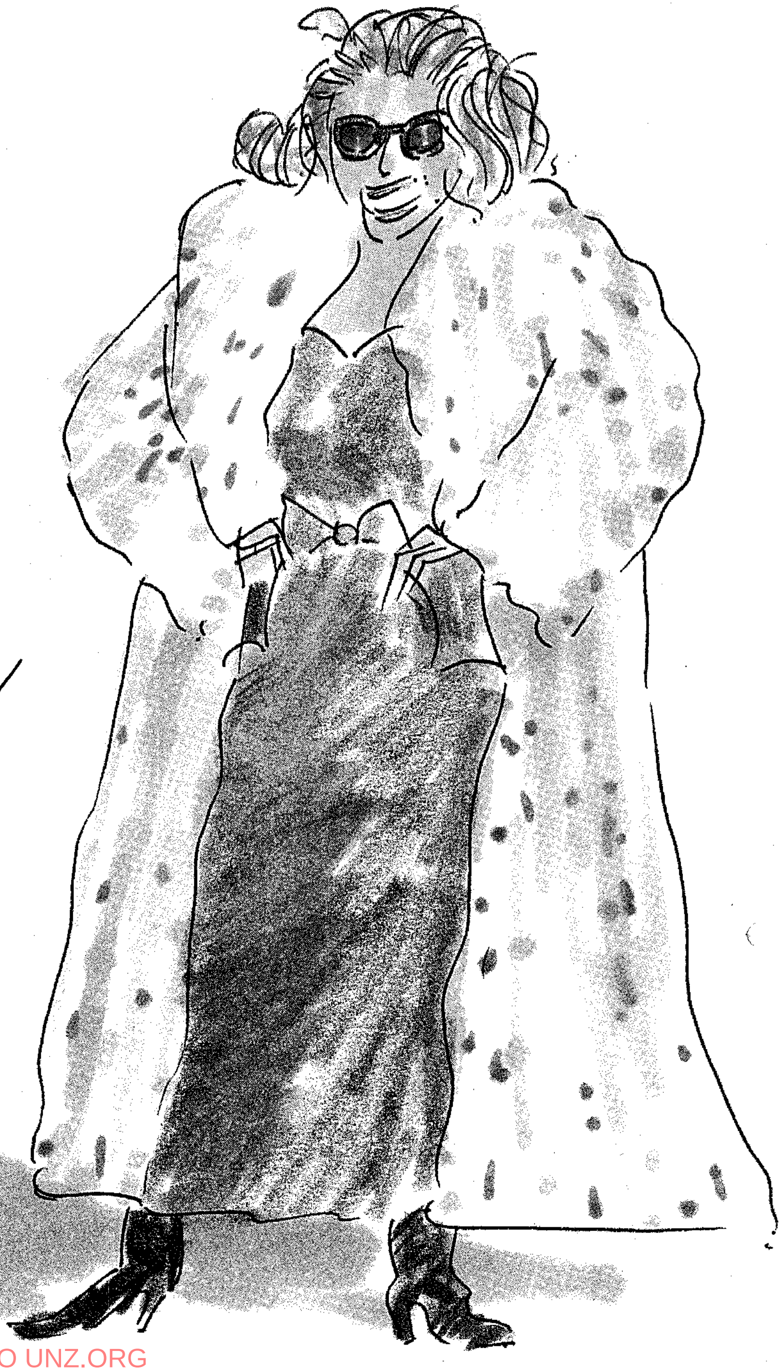
Such fears now had taken a new shape, but they were not in themselves new. When he was twenty, he had written to Nevill Coghill from his parents' London house, saying he had gone out to meet someone but on the way had bumped into a friend of his mother's, "a general, who told me I looked like a socialist on the way to address a meeting. So of course I had to go home when he was out of sight." The anecdote is of a piece with his other flights and disguises—fearful retreats that his fiction turned into triumphant imaginative advances. His son says, "He spent his whole life giving up things. Billiards, family, fishing, old friends, writing." However premature such renunciations were in Green's case, they aren't what make him special. (Maurice Bowra was once overheard to remark about Jacobean tragedy, "Everybody dies. Terribly funny.")

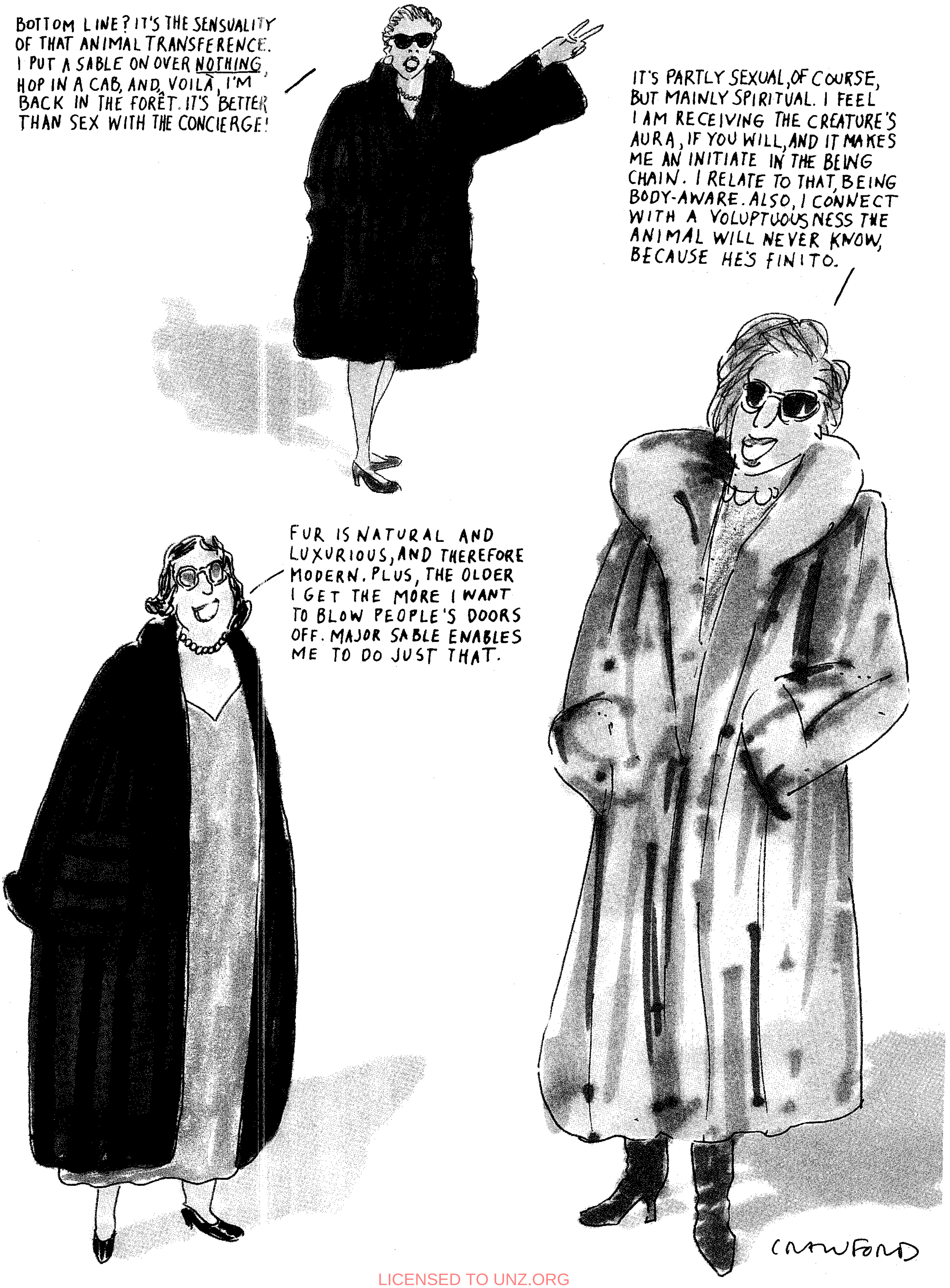
Perhaps the decision, or prayer, of the character Constance at the end of "Mood" was also Henry's: "As my two eyes are coördinated so let me have myself as my friend, may I have that glory where I draw on no one, lean on nobody. May I learn to be alone." ♦

ARTIST AT LARGE BY MICHAEL CRAWFORD

WHY FUR?


FOR ME, FUR IS ABOUT TRADE-OFFS: BETWEEN MY RESPECT FOR OTHER SPECIES ON THE PLANET AND MY DESIRE — I DON'T LIKE USING THE "P" WORD, BUT I ADORE PRIMAL EXPERIENCE! AND WHAT COULD BE MORE PRIMAL THAN BORDEAUX-DYED MINK?


LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR WET DOWN. WHAT ARE YOU, AN ANIMAL ACTIVIST? LET'S SEE WHAT RAISIN-BRAINED MAMMALS YOU'RE LOBBYING FOR WHEN YOUR MAIN MAN STARTS HAULING DOWN MAJOR MILS FROM G.M.


BOTTOM LINE? IT'S THE SENSUALITY OF THAT ANIMAL TRANSFERENCE. I PUT A SABLE ON OVER NOTHING, HOP IN A CAB, AND, VOILÀ, I'M BACK IN THE FORÊT. IT'S BETTER THAN SEX WITH THE CONCIERGE!
IT'S PARTLY SEXUAL, OF COURSE, BUT MAINLY SPIRITUAL. I FEEL I AM RECEIVING THE CREATURE'S AURA, IF YOU WILL, AND IT MAKES ME AN INITIATE IN THE BEING CHAIN. I RELATE TO THAT, BEING BODY-AWARE. ALSO, I CONNECT WITH A VOLUPTUOUSNESS THE ANIMAL WILL NEVER KNOW, BECAUSE HE'S FINITO.
FUR IS NATURAL AND LUXURIOUS, AND THEREFORE MODERN. PLUS, THE OLDER I GET THE MORE I WANT TO BLOW PEOPLE'S DOORS OFF. MAJOR SABLE ENABLES ME TO DO JUST THAT.
CRAWFORD

FICTION

FILTHY WITH THINGS

BY T. CORAGHESSAN BOYLE

He dreams, amid the clutter, of sparseness, purity, the wheeling, dark, star-haunted reaches beyond the grasp of this constrained little world, where distances are measured in light-years and even the galaxies fall away to nothing. But dreams get you nowhere, and Marsha's latest purchase, the figured mahogany highboy with carved likenesses of Jefferson, Washington, and Adams in place of pulls, will not fit in the garage. The garage, designed to accommodate three big chromium-hung hunks of metal in the two-ton range, will not hold anything at all, not even a Japanese fan folded like a stiletto and sunk to the hilt in a horizontal crevice. There are no horizontal crevices—or vertical, either. The mass of interlocked things, the great squared-up block of objects, of totems, of purchases made and accreted, of the precious and unattainable, is packed as tightly as the stones at Machu Picchu.

For a long moment, Julian stands there in the blistering heat of the driveway, contemplating the abstract sculpture of the garage while the boy from the Antique Warehouse rolls and unrolls the sleeves of his T-shirt and watches a pair of fourteen-year-old girls saunter up the sidewalk. The sun and heat are not salutary for the Colonial hardwood of which the highboy is composed, and the problem of where to put it has begun to reach critical proportions. Julian thinks of the storage shed behind the pool, where the newspapers are stacked a hundred deep and Marsha keeps her collection of Brazilian scythes and harrows, but immediately rejects it—the last time he was back there, he couldn't even get the door open. Over the course of the next ten seconds or so he develops a fantasy of draining the pool and enclosing it as a sort of step-down warehouse, and it's a rich fantasy, richly rewarding, but ultimately he dismisses it, too. If they were to drain the pool, where would Marsha keep her museum-quality collection of Early American whaling implements, buoys, and ship's furniture, not to mention the two hundred and twelve antique oarlocks currently mounted on the pool fence?

The boy's eyes are vapid. He's begun to whistle tunelessly and edge back toward the van. "So where'd you decide you want it?" he asks listlessly.

On the moon, Julian wants to say. Saturn. On the bleak blasted ice plains of Pluto. He shrugs. "On the porch, I guess."

The porch. Yes. The only problem is, the screened-in porch is already stacked to the eaves with sideboards, armoires, butter churns, and bentwood rockers. The best they can do, after a fifteen-minute struggle, is to wedge the thing two-thirds of the way in the door. "Well," says Julian, and he can feel his heart fluttering around his rib cage like some fist-size insect, "I guess that'll have to do." The laugh he appends is curt with embarrassment. "Won't have to worry about rain till November, anyway."

The boy isn't even breathing hard. He's long-lipped and thin, strung together with wire, and he's got one of those haircuts that make your head look as if it's been put on backward. For a long moment, he leans over the hand truck, fingers dangling, giving Julian a look that makes him feel he's from another planet. "Yeah, that's right," the boy finally murmurs, and he looks at his feet, then jerks himself up as if to drift back to the van, the freeway, the warehouse, before stopping cold again. He looks at Julian as if he's forgotten something, and Julian digs into his pocket and gives the boy three dollars for his efforts.

The sun is there, a living presence, as the boy backs the van out of the driveway, and Julian knows he's going to have to do something about the mahogany highboy—drape a sheet over it or maybe a plastic drop cloth—but somehow he can't seem to muster the energy. It's getting too much for him—all these things, the addition that was filled before it was finished, the prefab storage sheds on the back lawn, the crammed closets, the unlivable living room—and the butt end of the highboy hanging from the porch door seems a tangible expression of his deepest fears. Seeing it there, the harsh light glancing off its polished flanks, its clawed feet dangling in the air, he wants to cry out against the injustice of it all, his miserable lot, wants to dig out his binoculars and the thin, peeling ground cloth he's had since he was a boy in Iowa and go up to the mountains and let the meteor showers wash him clean, but he can't. That ancient handcrafted butt end represents guilt, Marsha's displeasure, a good and valuable thing left to deteriorate. He's begun to move toward it in a halfhearted shuffle, knowing from experience that he can squeeze it in there somehow, when a horn sounds breathlessly behind him. He turns, condemned like Sisyphus, and watches as Marsha wheels into the drive, the jeep packed to the windows and a great dark slab of furniture lashed to the roof like some primitive landing craft. "Julian!" she calls. "Julian! Wait till you see what I found!"

"I've seen worse," the woman says, and Julian can feel the short hairs on the back of his neck begin to stiffen—she's seen worse, but she's seen better, too. They're standing in the living room—or, rather, on the narrow footpath between the canyons of furniture that obscure the walls, the fireplace, even the ceiling of what was once the living room—and Julian, afraid to look her in the eye, leans back against a curio cabinet crammed with painted porcelain dolls in native costume, nervously turning her card over in his hand. The card is certainly minimalist—"Susan Certaine," it reads in a thin black embossed script, "Professional Organizer," and it gives a telephone number, nothing else—and the woman herself is impressive, brisk, imposing even, but he's just not sure. Something needs to be done, something radical—and of course Marsha, who left to cruise the flea markets an hour ago, will have to agree to it, at least in substance—but for all his misery and sense of oppression, for all the times he's joked about burning the place down or holding the world's biggest yard sale, Julian needs to be reassured, needs to be convinced.

"You've seen worse?" he prompts.

"Sure I have. Of course I have. What do you take me for, an amateur?"

Julian shrugs, turns up his palms, already on the defensive.

"Listen, in my business, Mr. Laxner, you tend to run across the hard cases, the ones anyone else would give up on—the Liberaces, the Warhols, the Nancy Reagans. You remember Imelda Marcos? That was me. I'm the one they called in to straighten out that mess. Twenty-seven hundred pairs of shoes alone, Mr. Laxner—think about that."

She pauses to let her eyes flicker over the room, the smallest, coldest flame burning behind the twin slivers of her contact lenses. She's a tall, pale, hovering presence, a woman stripped to the essentials—the hair torn back from her scalp and strangled in a bun, no cheeks, no lips, no makeup or jewelry, the dress black, the shoes black, the briefcase black as a dead black coal dug out of the bottom of the bag. "There's trouble here," she says finally, holding his eyes. "You're dirty with things, Mr. Laxner—filthy, up to your ears in the muck."

He is, he admits it, but he can't help wincing at the harshness of the indictment.

She leans closer, the briefcase clamped like a breastplate across her chest, her breath hot in his face: soap, Sen-Sen, Listerine. "And do you know who I am, Mr. Laxner?" she asks, a hard combative friction in the back of her throat, a rasp, a growl.

Julian tries to sound casual, tries to work the hint of a smile into the corners of his mouth and ignore the fact that his personal space has suddenly shrunk to nothing. "Susan Certaine?"

"I am the purifying stream, Mr. Laxner, that's who I am. The cleansing torrent, the baptismal font. I'll make a new man of you."

This is what she's here for, he knows it—this is what he needs, discipline, compulsion, the iron promise—but still he can't help edging away, a little dance of the feet, the condensing of a shoulder. "Well, yes, but—" He gives her a sidelong glance, and still she's there, right there, breathing out her Sen-Sen like a dental hygienist. "It's a big job, it's—"

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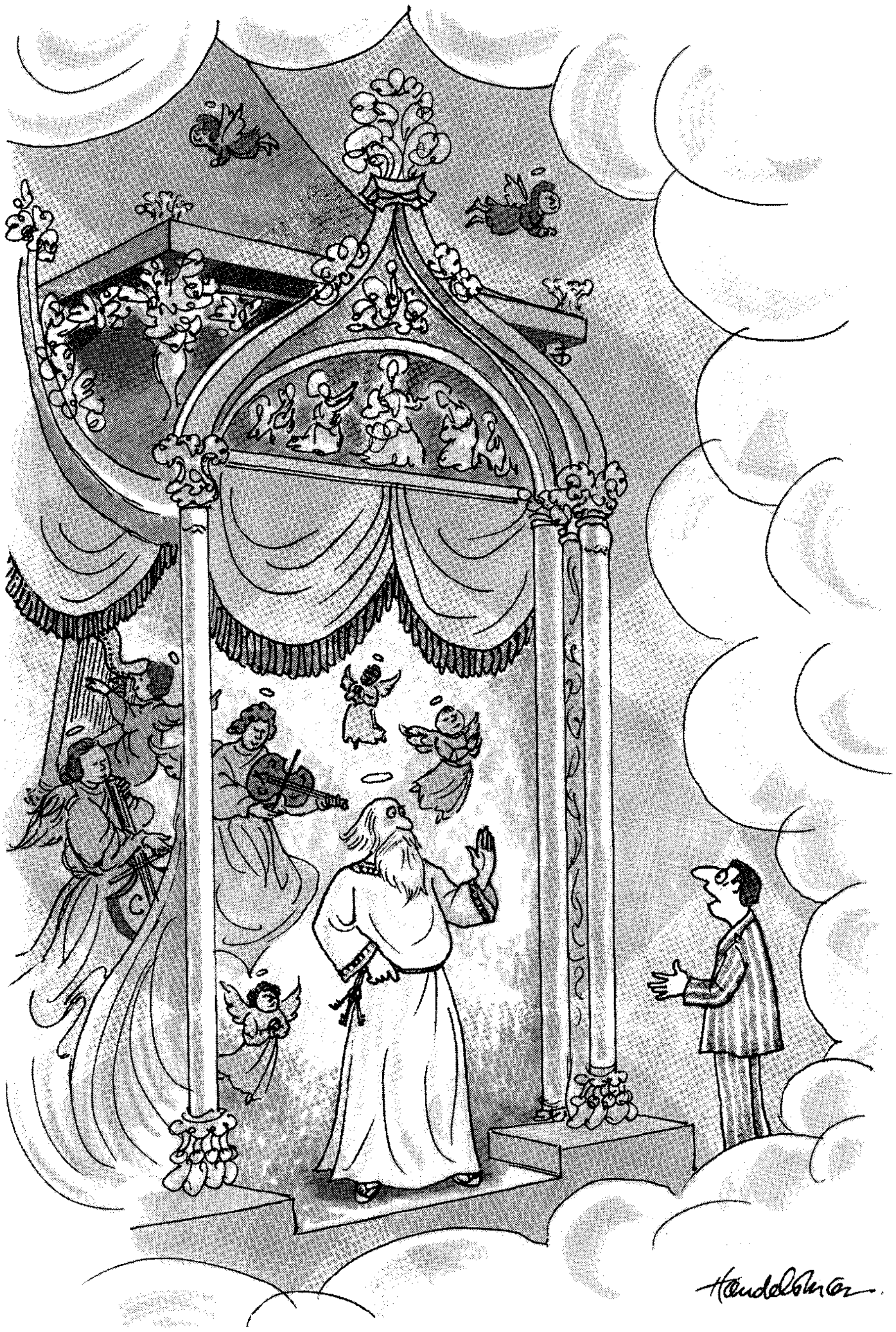
His go-ahead. A sudden vista opens up before him—unbroken beaches, limitless plains, lunar seas and Venusian deserts, the yawning black interstellar wastes. Would it be too much to ask to see the walls of his own house? Just once? Just for an hour? Yes, O.K., sure, he wants to say, but the immensity of it stifles him. "I'll have to ask my wife," he hears himself saying. "I mean, consult with her, think it over."

"Pah! That's what they all say." Her look is incendiary, bitter, the eyes curdling behind the film of the lenses, the lipless mouth clenched round something rotten. "Tell me something, Mr. Laxner,



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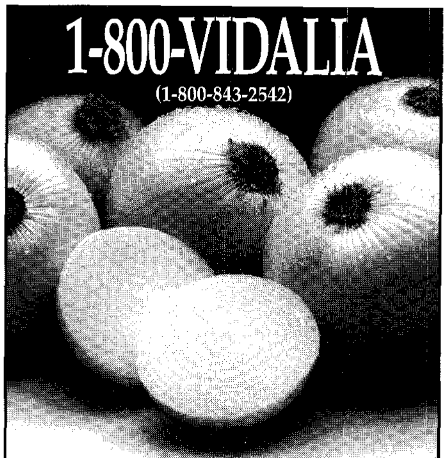

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if you don't mind my asking—you're a stargazer, aren't you?"

"Beg pardon?"

"The upstairs room, the one over the kitchen?" Her eyes are jumping, some mad electric impulse shooting through her like a power surge scorching the lines. "Come on now, come clean. All those charts and telescopes, the books—there must be a thousand of them."

Now it's Julian's turn, the ball in his court, the ground solid under his feet. "I'm an astronomer, if you want to know."

She says nothing, just watches him out of those burning messianic eyes, waiting.

"Well, actually, it's more of a hobby really—but I do teach a course Wednesday nights at the community college."

The eyes leap at him. "I knew it. You intellectuals, you're the worst, the very worst."

"But, but"—stammering again despite himself—"it's not me, it's Marsha."

"Yes," she returns, composing herself like some lean effortless snake coiling to strike. "I've heard that one before. It takes two to tango, Mr. Laxner, the pathological aggregator and the enabler. Either way, you're guilty. Don't *ask* your wife, tell her, take command." Turning her back on him as if the matter has been settled, she props her briefcase up against the near bank of stacked ottomans, produces a notepad, and begins jotting down figures in a firm, microscopic hand. Without looking up, she swings suddenly round on him. "Family money?" she asks.

And he answers before he can think. "Yes. My late mother."

"All right," she says, "all right, that's fine. But before we go any further perhaps you'd be interested in hearing a little story one of my clients told me, a journalist, a name you'd recognize in a minute. . . ." The eyes twitch again, the eyeballs themselves pulsing with that electric charge. "Well, a few years ago he was in Ethiopia—in the Eritrean province—during the civil war there? He was looking for some refugees to interview and a contact put him on to a young couple with three children, they'd been grain merchants before the war broke out, upper middle class, they even had a car. Well, they agreed to be interviewed, because he was giving them a little something and they hadn't eaten in a week, but when the time came they hung back. And do you know why?"

He doesn't know. But the room, the room he passes through twenty times a day like a tourist trapped in a museum, seems to close in on him.

"They were embarrassed, that's why—they didn't have any clothes. And I don't mean as in 'Oh dear, I don't have a thing to wear to the Junior League Ball,' but literally no clothes. Nothing at all, not even a rag. They finally showed up like Adam and Eve, one hand clamped over their privates." She held his eyes till he had to look away. "And what do you think of that, Mr. Laxner? I'd be interested to know."

What can he say? He didn't start the war, he didn't take the food from their mouths and strip the clothes from their backs, but he feels guilty all the same, bloated with guilt, fat with it, his pores oozing the golden rancid sheen of excess and waste. "That's terrible," he murmurs, and still he can't quite look her in the eye.

"Terrible?" she cries, her voice homing in. "You're damned right it's terrible. Awful. The saddest thing in the world. And do you know what? Do you?" She's even closer now, so close he could be breathing for her. "That's why I'm charging you a thousand dollars a day."

The figure seizes him, wrings him dry, paralyzes his vocal apparatus. He can feel something jerking savagely at the cords of his throat. "A thousand—*dollars*—a day?" he echoes in disbelief. "I knew it wasn't going to be cheap—"

But she cuts him off, a single insistent finger pressed to his lips. "You're dirty," she whispers, and her voice is different now, thrilling, soft as a lover's. "You're filthy. And I'm the only one to make you clean again."

The following evening, with Julian's collusion, Susan Certaine and her associate, Dr. Doris Hauskopf, appear at the back gate just after supper. It's a clear, searing evening, not a trace of moisture in the sky—the kind of evening that would later lure Julian out under the stars if it weren't for the light pollution. He and Marsha are enjoying a cup of decaf after a meal of pita, tabouli, and dolma from the Armenian deli, sitting out on the patio amid the impenetrable maze of lawn furniture, when Susan Certaine's crisp, penetrating tones break through the muted roar of freeway traffic and sporadic birdsong: "Mr. Laxner? Are you there?"

Marsha, enthroned in wicker and browsing through a collectibles catalogue, gives him a quizzical look, expecting perhaps a delivery boy or a package from U.P.S.—Marsha, his Marsha, in her pastel shorts and oversized top, the quintessential innocent, so easily pleased. He loves her in that moment, loves her so fiercely he almost wants to call the whole thing off, but Susan Certaine is there, undeniable, and her voice rings out a second time, drilling him with its adamancy: "Mr. Laxner?"

He rises then, ducking ceramic swans and wrought-iron planters, feeling like Judas.

The martial tap of heels on the flagstone walk, the slap of twin briefcases against rigorously conditioned thighs, and there they are, the professional organizer and her colleague the psychologist, hovering over a bewildered Marsha like customs inspectors. There's a moment of silence, Marsha looking from Julian to the intruders and back again, before he realizes that it's up to him to make the introductions. "Marsha," he begins, and he seems to be having trouble finding his voice, "Marsha, this is Ms. Certaine. And her colleague, Dr. Doris Hauskopf—she's a specialist in aggregation disorders. They run a service for people like us. . . . You remember a few weeks ago, when we—" But Marsha's look wraps fingers around his throat and he can't go on.

Blanching, pale to the roots of her hair, Marsha leaps up from the chair and throws a wild, hunted look round her. "No," she gasps, "no," and for a moment Julian thinks she's going to bolt, but the psychologist, a compact woman with a hairdo even more severe than Susan Certaine's, steps forward to take charge of the situation. "Poor Marsha," she clucks, spreading her arms to embrace her. "Poor, poor Marsha."

The trees bend under the weight of the carved birdhouses from Heidelberg and Zurich, a breeze comes up to play among the Taiwanese wind chimes that fringe the eaves in an unbroken line, and the house—the jam-packed house in which they haven't been able to prepare a meal, or even find a frying pan, in over two years—seems to rise up off its foundation and settle back again. Suddenly Marsha is sobbing, clutching Dr. Hauskopf's squared-up shoulders and sobbing like a child. "I know I've been wrong," she wails. "I know it, but I just can't, I can't—"

"Hush now, Marsha, hush," the doctor croons, and Susan Certaine gives Julian a fierce, tight-lipped look of triumph. "That's what we're here for. Don't you worry about a thing."

THE next morning, at the stroke of seven, Julian is awakened from uneasy dreams by the deep-throated rumble of heavy machinery. In the first, startled moment of waking, he thinks it's the noise of the garbage truck and feels a sudden stab of regret for having failed to put out the cans and reduce his load by its weekly fraction, but gradually he becomes aware that the sound is localized, static, stalled at the curb out front of the house. Throwing off the drift of counterpanes, quilts, and granny-square afghans beneath which he and his wife lie entombed each night, he struggles through the precious litter of the floor to the bedroom window. Outside, drawn up to the curb in a sleek, dark, glittering line, their engines snarling, are three eighteen-wheel moving vans painted in metal-flake black and emblazoned with the Certaine logo. And somewhere, deep in the bowels of the house, the doorbell has begun to ring. Insistently.

Marsha isn't there to answer it. Marsha isn't struggling up bewildered from the morass of bedclothes to wonder who could be ringing at this hour. She isn't in the bathroom trying to locate her toothbrush among the mustache cups and fin-de-siècle Viennese soap dishes or in the kitchen wondering which of the coffee drippers-steamers-percolators to use. She isn't in the house at all, and the magnitude of that fact hits him now, hard, like fear or hunger.

No, Marsha is twenty-seven miles away, in the Susan Certaine Residential Treatment Center, in Simi Valley, separated from him for the first time in their sixteen years of marriage. It was Dr. Hauskopf's idea. She felt it would be better this way, less traumatic for everyone concerned. After the initial, twilit embrace of the preceding evening, the doctor and Susan Certaine had led Marsha out front, away from the house and Julian—her "twin crutches," as the doctor put it—and conducted an im-

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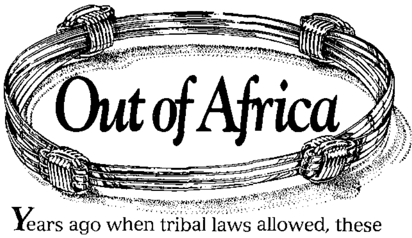

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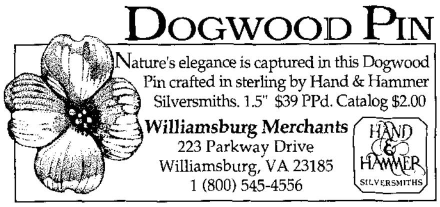

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promptu three-hour therapy session on the lawn. Julian preoccupied himself with his lunar maps and some calculations he'd been wanting to make relating to the total area of the Mare Fecunditatis in the southeast quadrant, but he couldn't help glancing out the window now and again. The three women were camped on the grass, sitting in a circle with their legs folded under them, yoga style, while Marsha's gaslit tiki torches blazed over their heads like a forest afire.

Weirdly lit, they dipped their torsos toward one another and their hands flashed white against the shadows while Marsha's menagerie of lawn ornaments clustered round them in silent witness. There was something vaguely disquieting about the scene, and it made Julian feel like an interloper, already bereft in some deep, essential way, and he had to turn away from it. He put down his pencil and made himself a drink. He flicked on the TV. Paced. Finally, at quarter to ten, he heard them coming in the front door. Marsha was subdued, her eyes downcast, and it was clear that she'd been crying. They allowed her one suitcase. No cosmetics, two changes of clothing, underwear, a nightgown. Nothing else. Not a thing. Julian embraced his wife on the front steps while Susan Certaine and Dr. Hauskopf looked on impatiently, and then they were gone.

But now the doorbell is ringing and Julian shrugging into his pants and looking for his shoes even as Susan Certaine's whiplash cry reverberates in the stairwell and stings him to action. "Mr. Laxner! Open up! Open up!"

It takes him sixty seconds. He would have liked to comb his hair, brush his teeth, reacquaint himself with the parameters of human life on the planet, but there it is, sixty seconds, and he's still buttoning his shirt as he throws back the door to admit her. "I thought . . . I thought you said eight," he gasps.

Susan Certaine stands rigid on the doorstep, flanked by two men in black jumpsuits with the Certaine logo stitched in gold over their left breast pockets. The men are big-headed, bulky, great slabs of muscle ladled over their shoulders and upper arms. Behind them, massed like a football team coming to the aid of a fallen comrade, are the uncountable others, all in Certaine black. "I did," she breathes, stepping past him without a glance. "We like to keep our clients on their toes. Mike!" she cries. "Fernando!" And the two men spring past Julian and into the ranked gloom of the house. "Clear paths here"— pointing away toward the back room and then to the kitchen—"and here."

The door stands open. Beyond it, the front lawn is a turmoil of purposefully moving bodies of ramps, ladders, forklifts, flattened boxes in bundles six feet high. Already, half a dozen workers—they're women, Julian sees now, women cut in the Certaine mold, with their hair shorn or pinned rigidly back—have begun constructing the cardboard containers that will take the measure of his and Marsha's life together. And now others, five, six, seven of them, speaking in low tones and in a language he doesn't recognize, file past him with rolls of bar-code tape, while out on the front walk, just beyond the clutter of the porch, three men in mirrored sunglasses set up a gantlet of tables equipped with computers and electric-eye guns. Barefooted, unshaven, unshowered, his teeth unbrushed and his hair uncombed, Julian can only stand and gape—it's like an invasion. It *is* an invasion.

When he emerges from the shower ten minutes later, wrapped only in a towel, he finds a small, hunched Asian woman squatting on her heels in front of the cabinets under the twin sinks, methodically affixing bar-code stickers to jars of petroleum jelly, rolls of toilet paper, and cans of cleanser before stacking them neatly in a box at her side. "What do you think you're doing?" Julian demands, and this is too much, outrageous, in his own bathroom, but the woman just grins out of a toothless mouth, gives him the thumbs-up sign and says, "A-O.K., No. 1 Charlie!"

His heart is going, he can feel it, and he tries to stay calm, tries to remind himself that these people are only doing their job, doing what he could never do, liberating him, cleansing him, but before he can get his pants back on two more women materialize in the bedroom, poking through the drawers with their ubiquitous stickers. “Get out!” he roars. “Out!” He makes a rush at them, but it’s as if he didn’t exist, as if he’d already become an irrelevance in the face of the terrible weight of his possessions. Unconcerned, they silently hold their ground, heads bowed, hands flicking all the while over his handkerchiefs, underwear, socks, over Marsha’s things, her jewelry, brassieres, her ashtray and lacquered-box collections and the glass case that houses her Thimbles of the World set.

“All right,” Julian says, “all right. We’ll just see about this, we’ll just see.” And he dresses right there in front of them, boldly, angrily, hands trembling on buttons and zipper, before slamming out into the hallway in search of Susan Certaine.

The only problem is he can’t find her. The house, almost impossible to navigate in the best of times, is like the hold of a sinking ship. All is chaos. A dark mutter of voices rises up to engulf him—shouts, curses, dust hanging in the air, the floorboards crying out, and things, objects of all shapes and sizes, sailing past him in bizarre array. Susan Certaine is not in the kitchen, not on the lawn, not in the garage or the pool area or the guest wing. Finally, in frustration, he stops a worker with a Chinese vase slung over one shoulder and asks if he’s seen her. The man has a hard face, smoldering eyes, a mustache so thick it eliminates his mouth. “And who might you be?” he growls.

“The owner.” Julian feels lightheaded. He could swear he’s never seen the vase before.

“Owner of what?”

“What do you mean, ‘owner of what’? All this”—gesturing at the chaotic tumble of carpets, lamps, furniture, and bric-a-brac. “The house. The, the—”

“You want *Ms.* Certaine,” the man says, cutting him off. “I’d advise you best look upstairs, in the den,” and then he’s gone, shouldering his load out the door.

The den. But that’s Julian’s sanctuary, the only room in the house where you can draw a breath, find a book on the shelves, a chair to sit in—his desk is there, his telescopes, his charts. There’s no need for any organizing in his den. What is she thinking? He takes the stairs two at a time, dodging Certaine workers laden with artifacts, and bursts through the door to find Susan Certaine seated at his desk and the room already half-stripped.

“But, but what are you doing?” he cries, snatching at his Velbon tripod as one of the big men in black fends him off with an unconscious elbow. “This room doesn’t need anything, this room is off limits, this is mine—”

“*Mine*,” Susan Certaine mimics, leaping suddenly to her feet. “Did you hear that, Fernando? Mike?” The two men pause, grinning wickedly, and the wizened Asian woman, at work now in here, gives a short sharp laugh of derision. Susan Certaine crosses the room in two strides, thrusting her jaw at Julian, forcing him back a step. “Listen to yourself—‘mine, mine, mine.’ Don’t you see what you’re saying? Marsha’s only half the problem, as in any co-dependent relationship. What did you think, that you could solve all your problems by depriving her of *her* things, making *her* suffer, while all your precious little star charts and musty books and whatnot remain untouched? Is that it?”

He can feel the eyes of the big men on him. Across the room, at the bookcase, the Asian woman applies stickers to his first edition of Percival Lowell’s “Mars and Its Canals,” the astrolabe that once belonged to Captain Joshua Slocum, the Starview scope his mother gave him when he turned twelve. “No, but, but—”

“Would that be fair, Mr. Laxner? Would that be equitable? Would it?” She doesn’t wait for an answer, turning instead to pose the question to her henchmen. “You think it’s fair, Mike? Fernando?”

“No gain without pain,” Mike says.

“Amen,” Fernando chimes in.

“Listen,” Julian blurts, and he’s upset now, as upset as he’s ever been, “I don’t care what you say, I’m the boss here and I say the stuff stays, just as it is—you, now, put down that tripod.”

No one moves. Mike looks to Fernando, Fernando looks to Susan Certaine. After a moment, she lays a hand on Julian’s arm. “You’re not the boss here, Julian,” she says, the voice sunk low in her throat. “Not anymore. If you have any doubts, just read the contract.” She attempts a smile, though smiles are clearly not her forte. “The question is, do you want to get organized or not? You’re paying me a thousand dollars a day, which breaks down to roughly two dollars a minute. You want to stand here and shoot the breeze at two dollars a minute, or do you want action?”

Julian hangs his head. She’s right, he knows it. “I’m sorry,” he says finally. “It’s just that I can’t . . . I mean I want to do something, anything—”

“You want to do something? You really want to help?”

Mike and Fernando are gone, already heading down the stairs with their burdens, and the Asian woman, her hands in constant motion, has turned to his science-fiction collection. He shrugs. “Yes, sure. What can I do?”

Susan Certaine glances at her watch, squares her shoulders, fixes him with her

---

RETURN

After years of absence he rolled home,
new wife in tow, child, too, his pockets
stuffed with bills—enough, in his family’s eyes,
to make him rich. The language, like his old shirt,
still fit, following contours of daily meaning.
He relaxed into nuance and tense, found words
the way he knew each turn in the old town,
streets etched in mind and only the odd
glitch to remind of time intervening—
grayed heads, worn carpets in the cramped rooms
where new children giggled over games,
their history and slang no longer his.
His mother rested her hand on his arm. He wanted
never to have left and to be gone.

—Sandy Solomon

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dark, unreadable gaze. "You can take me to breakfast."

SUSAN CERTAINE orders wheat toast, dry, and coffee, black. Though he's starving, though he feels cored out from the back of his throat to the last constricted loop of his intestines, he follows suit. He's always liked a big breakfast—eggs over easy, three strips of bacon, toast, waffles, coffee, orange juice, yogurt with fruit—and never more so than when he's under stress or feels something coming on, but with Susan Certaine sitting stiffly across from him, her lips pursed in distaste, disapproval, ascetic renunciation of all and everything he stands for, he just doesn't have the heart. Besides which, he's on unfamiliar ground here. The corner coffee shop, where he and Marsha have breakfasted nearly every day for the past three years, wasn't good enough for her. She had to drive halfway across the Valley to a place *she* knew, though for the life of him he can't see a whole lot of difference between the two places—same menu, same coffee, even the waitresses look the same. But they're not. And the fact of it throws him off balance.

"You know, I've been thinking, Mr. Laxner," Susan Certaine says, speaking into the void left by the disappearance of the waitress. "You really should come over to us. For the rest of the week, I mean."

Come over? Julian watches her, wondering what in God's name she's talking about, his stomach sinking over the thought of his Heinleins and Asimovs in the hands of strangers, let alone his texts and first editions and all his equipment—if they so much as scratch a lens, he'll . . . But his thoughts stop right there. Susan Certaine, locked in the grip of her black rigidity, is giving him a look he hasn't seen before. The liminal smile, the coy arch of the eyebrows. She's a young woman, younger than Marsha, far younger, and the apprehension hits him with a jolt. Here he is, sharing the most intimate meal of the day with a woman he barely knows, a young woman. He feels a wave of surrender wash over him.

"How can I persuade you?"

"I'm sorry," he murmurs, fumbling with his cup, "but I don't think I'm following you—persuade me what?"

"The Co-Dependent Hostel. For the spouses. The spoilers. For men like you, Mr. Laxner, who give their wives material things instead of babies, instead of love."

"But I resent that. Marsha's physically incapable of bearing children—and I *do* love her, very much so."

"Whatever." She waves her hand in dismissal. "But don't get the impression that it's a men's club or anything—you'd be surprised how many women are the enablers in these relationships. You're going to need a place to stay until Sunday anyway."

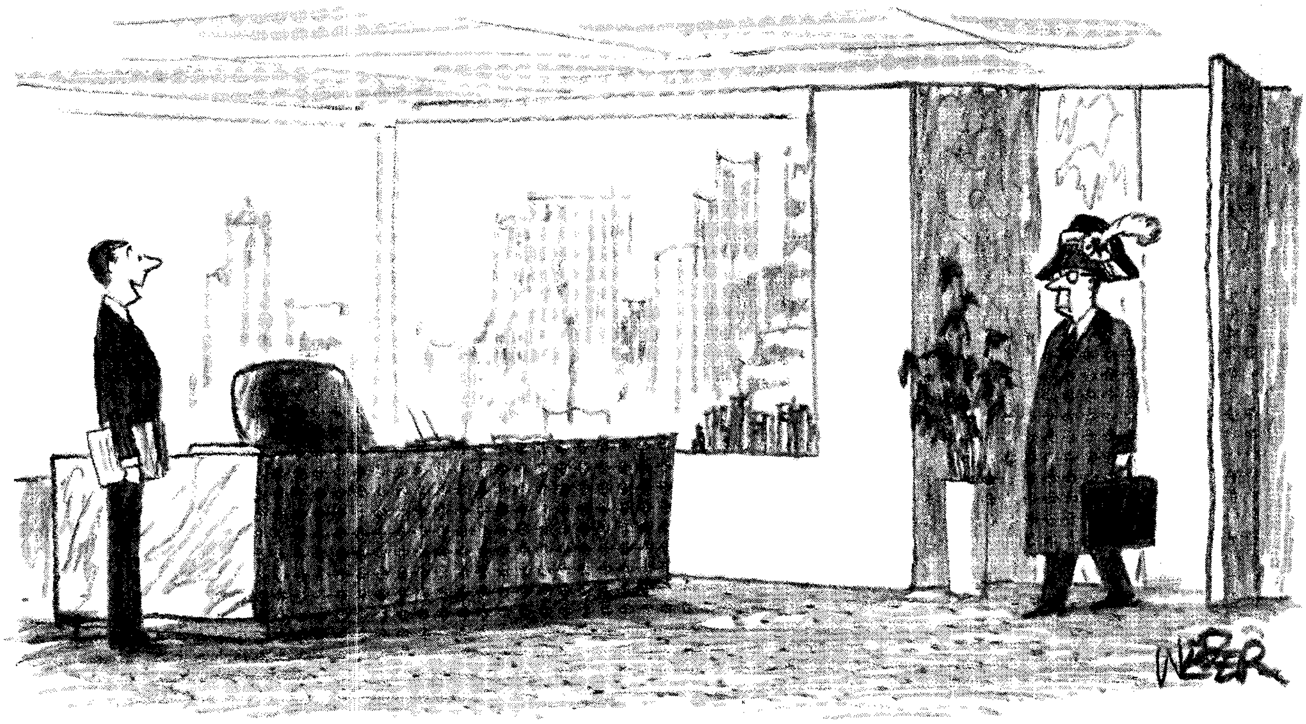
"You mean—you want me to move out? Of my own house?"

She lays a hand on his. "Don't you think it would be fairer to Marsha? She moved out, didn't she? And, by the way, Dr. Hauskopf tells me she passed a very restful night. Very restful." A sigh. A glance out the window. "Well, what do you say?"

Julian pictures a big, gray, featureless building lost in a vacancy of smog, men in robes and pajamas staring dully at newspapers, the intercom crackling. "But my things—"

"Things are what we're disburdening you of, Mr. Laxner. Things are crushing you, stealing your space, polluting your soul. That's what you hired me for, remember?" She pushes her cup aside and leans forward, and the old look is back, truculent, disdainful. He finds himself gazing into the shimmering nullity of her eyes. "We'll take care of all that," she says, her voice pitched low again, subtle and entrancing, "right on down to your toothbrush, hemorrhoid cream, and carpet slippers." As if by legerdemain, a contract has appeared between the creamer and the twin plates of dry unadulterated toast. "Just sign here, Mr. Laxner, right at the bottom."

Julian hesitates, patting down his pockets for his reading glasses. The original contract, the one that spelled out the responsibilities of Certaine Enterprises with respect to his things—and his and Marsha's obligations to Certaine Enterprises—had run to three hundred and twenty-seven pages, a document he barely had time to skim before signing, and now this. Without his reading glasses he can barely make out the letterhead. "But how much is it, per day, I mean? Marsha's, uh, treatment was four hundred a day, correct? This wouldn't be anywhere in that ballpark, would it?"



"Morning, E.J. Great hat."

• •

"Think of it as a vacation, Mr. Laxner. You're going away on a little trip, that's all. And on Sunday, when you get home, you'll have your space back. Permanently." She looks into his eyes. "Can you put a price on that?"

THE Susan Certaine Co-Dependent Hostel is located off a shady street in Sherman Oaks, on the grounds of a defunct private boys' school, and it costs about twice as much as a good hotel in midtown Manhattan. Julian protested—it was Marsha, Marsha was the problem, she was the one who needed treatment, not him—but Susan Certaine, over two slices of dry wheat toast, wore him down. He'd given her control over his life, and she was exercising it. That's what he'd paid for, that's what he'd wanted. He asked only to go home and pack a small suitcase, an overnight bag, anything, but she refused him even that—and refused him the use of his own car on top of it. "Withdrawal has got to be total," she says, easing up to the curb in front of the sprawling complex of earth-toned buildings even as a black-clad attendant hustles up to the car to pull open the door. "For *both* partners. I'm sure you'll be very happy here, Mr. Laxner."

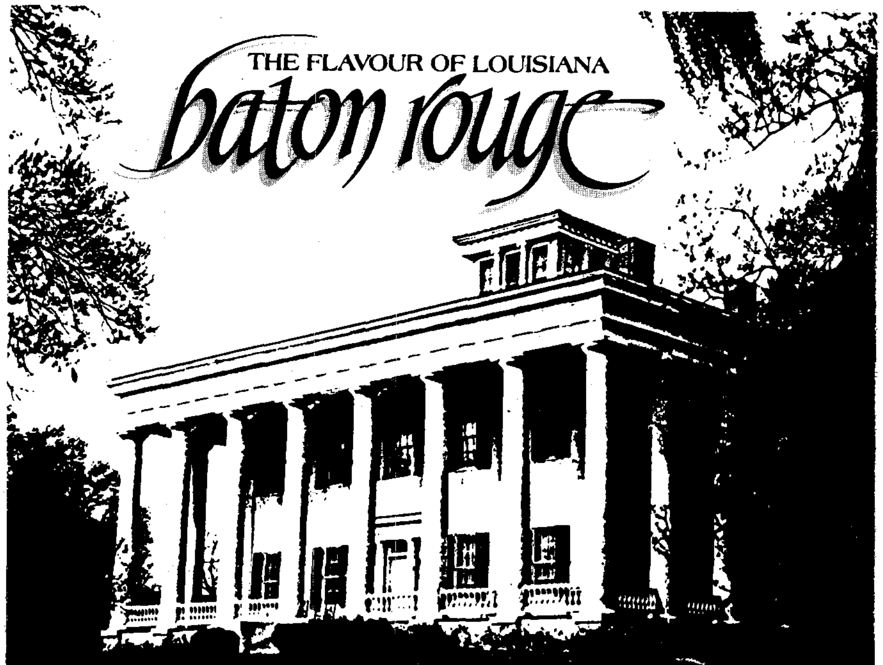
"You're not coming in?" he says, a flutter of panic setting in as he shoots a look from her to the doorman and back again.

Her black Mercedes hums beneath them. A bird folds its wings and dips across the lawn. "Oh, no, no, not at all. You're on your own here, Mr. Laxner, I'm afraid—but in the best of hands, I assure you. No, my job is to go back to that black hole of a house and make it livable, to catalogue your things, organize. *Organize,* Mr. Laxner, that's my middle name."

Ten minutes later, Julian finds himself sitting on the rock-hard upper bunk in the room he is to share with a lugubrious man named Fred, contemplating the appointments. The place is certainly Essene, but then he supposes that's the idea. Aside from the bunk bed, the room contains two built-in chests of drawers, two mirrors, two desks, and two identical posters revealing an eye-level view of the Bonneville Salt Flats. The communal bathroom/shower is down the checked-linoleum hallway to the right. Fred, a big pouchy sack of a man who owns a BMW dealership in Encino, stares gloomily out the window, and says only, "Kind of reminds you of college, doesn't it?"

In the evening, there's a meal in the cafeteria—instant mashed potatoes with gravy, some sort of overcooked unidentifiable meatlike substance, Jell-O—and Julian is surprised at the number of his fellow-sufferers, slump-shouldered men and women, some of them quite young, who shuffle in and out of the big room like souls in Purgatory. After dinner, there's a private get-acquainted chat with Dr. Heiko Hauskopf, Dr. Doris's husband, and then an informational film about acquisitive disorders, followed by a showing of "The Snake Pit" in the auditorium. Fred, as it turns out, is a belcher, tooth-grinder, and nocturnal mutterer of the first degree, and Julian spends the night awake, staring into the dark corner above him and imagining tiny solar systems there, hanging in the abyss, other worlds radiant with being.

Next morning, after a breakfast of desiccated eggs and corrosive coffee, he goes AWOL. Strides out the door without a glance, calls a taxi from the phone booth on the corner, and checks into the nearest motel. From there he attempts to call Marsha, though both Susan Certaine and Dr. Doris had felt it would be better not to "establish contact" during therapy. He can't get through. She's unavailable, indisposed, undergoing



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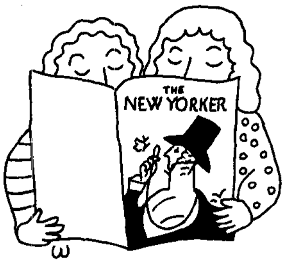

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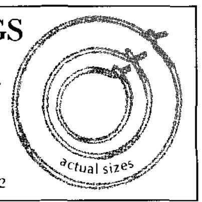


counselling, having her nails done, and who is this calling, please?

For two days Julian holes up in his motel room like an escaped convict, feeling dangerous, feeling like a lowlife, a malingerer, a bum, letting the stubble sprout on his face, revelling in the funk of his unwashed clothes. He could walk up the street and buy himself a change of underwear and socks at least—he's still got his credit cards, after all—but something in him resists. Lying there in the sedative glow of the TV, surrounded by the detritus of the local fast-food outlets, belching softly to himself and pulling meditatively at the pint of bourbon balanced on his chest, he begins to see the point of the exercise. He misses Marsha desperately, misses his home, his bed, his things. But this is the Certaine way—to know deprivation, to know the hollowness of the manufactured image and the slow death of the unquenchable tube, to purify oneself through renunciation. These are his thirty days and thirty nights, this is his trial, his penance. He lies there, prostrate, and when the hour of his class at the community college rolls round, he gives no account of himself, not even a phone call.

On the third night, the telephone rings. Absorbed in a dramedy about a group of young musician/actor/models struggling to make ends meet in a rented beach house in Malibu, and well into his second pint of bourbon, he stupidly answers it. "Mr. Laxner?" Susan Certaine's hard, flat voice drives at him through the wires.

"But, how—?" he gasps, before she cuts him off.

"Don't ask questions, just listen. You understand, of course, that as per the terms of your agreement you owe Certaine Enterprises for six days' room and board at the Co-Dependent Hostel whether you make use of the facilities or not—"

He understands.

"Good," she snaps. "Fine. Now that that little matter has been resolved, let me tell you that your wife is responding beautifully to treatment and that she, unlike you, Mr. Laxner, is making the most of her stay in a nonacquisitive environment—and, by the way, I should caution you against trying to contact her again; it could be terribly detrimental, traumatic, a real setback."

Whipped, humbled, pried out of his cranny with a sure, sharp stick, Julian can only murmur an apology.

There's a pause on the other end of the line—Julian can hear the hiss of gathering breath, the harsh whistle of the air rushing past Susan Certaine's fleshless lips, down her ascetic throat, and into the repository of her disciplined lungs. "The good news," she says finally, drawing it out, "is that you're clean. Clean, Mr. Laxner. As pure as a babe sprung from the womb."

Julian is having difficulty putting it all together. His own breathing is quick and shallow. He rubs at his stubble, sits up, and sets the pint of bourbon aside. "You mean . . . ?"

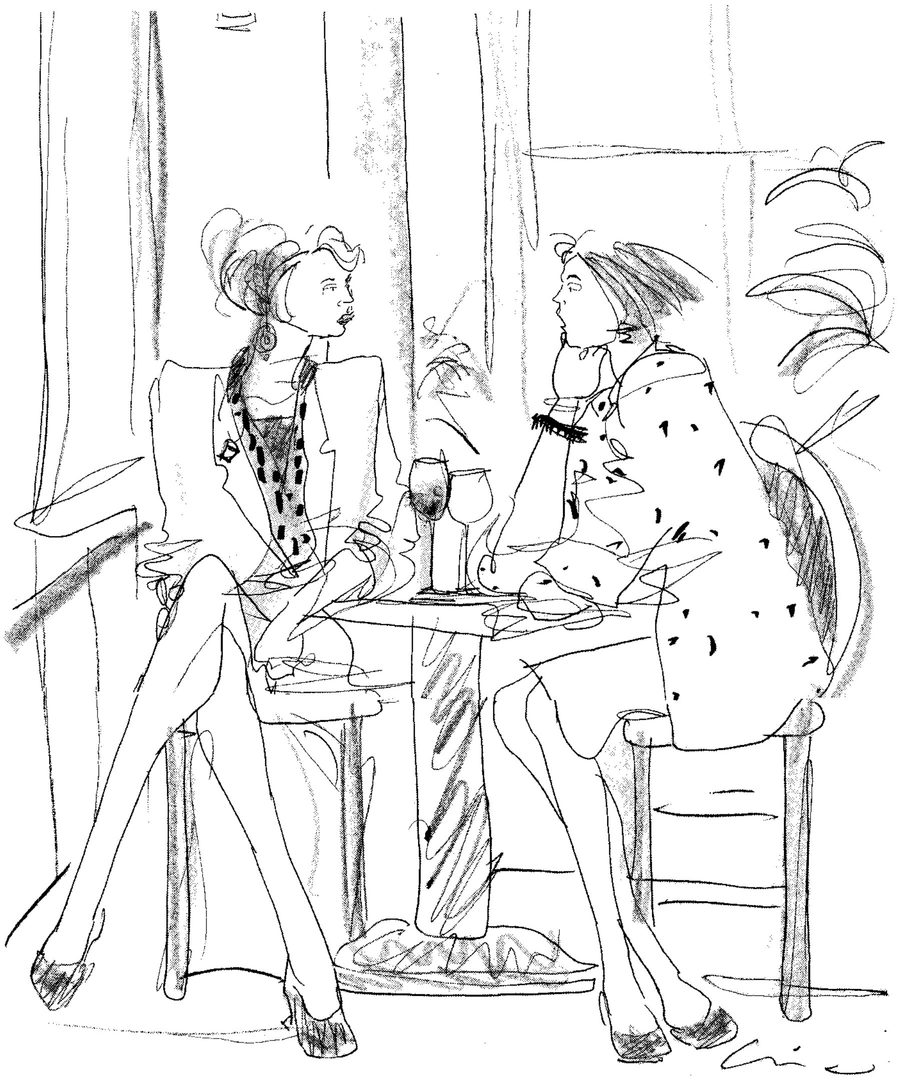
"I mean twelve o'clock noon, Mr. Laxner, Sunday the twenty-seventh. Your place. You be there."

On Sunday morning, Julian is up at six. Eschewing the religious programming in favor of the newspaper, he pores methodically over each of the twenty-two sections—including the obituaries, the personals, and the recondite details of the weather in Rio, Yakutsk, and Rangoon—and manages to kill an hour and a half. His things have been washed—twice now, in the bathroom sink, with a bar of Ivory soap standing in for detergent—and before he slips into them he shaves himself with a disposable razor that gouges his face in half a dozen places and makes him yearn for the reliable purr and gentle embrace of his Braun 4550. While flicking through the channels, he breakfasts on stale cruller and on coffee that tastes of bile. Then he shaves a second time and combs his hair. It is nine-oh-five. The room stinks of stir-fry, pepperoni, garlic—the sad reek of his take-out life. He can wait no longer.

Unfortunately, the cab is forty-five minutes late, and it's nearly ten-thirty by the time they reach the freeway. On top of that, there's a delay—roadwork, they always wait till Sunday for roadwork—and the cab sits inert in an endless field of gleaming metal until finally the cabbie jerks savagely at the wheel and bolts forward, muttering to himself as he rockets along the shoulder and down the nearest off-ramp. Julian hangs on, feeling curiously detached as they weave in and out of traffic and the streets become increasingly familiar. And then the cab swings into his block and he's there. Home. His heart begins to pound in his chest.

He doesn't know what he's been expecting—banners, brass bands, Marsha embracing him joyously on the front steps of an immaculate house—but as he climbs out of the cab to survey his domain, he can't help feeling a tug of disappointment: the place looks pretty much the same—gray flanks, white trim, a thin, sorry plume of bougainvillea clutching at the trellis over the door. But then it hits him: the lawn ornaments are gone. The tiki torches, the plaster pickaninnies and the flag holders, and all the rest of the outdoor claptrap have vanished as if into the maw of some brooding tropical storm, and for that he's thankful. Deeply thankful. He stands there a moment, amazed at the expanse of the lawn, plain simple grass, each blade a revelation—he never dreamed he had this much grass. The place looks the way it did when they bought it, wondering naïvely if it would be too big for just the two of them.

He saunters up the walk like a prospective buyer, admiring the house, truly admiring it, for the first time in years. How crisp it looks, how spare and uncluttered! She's a genius, he's thinking, she really is, as he mounts the front steps fingering his keys and humming, actually humming. But then, standing there in the quickening sun, he glances through the window and sees that the porch is empty—swept clean, not a thing left behind—and the tune goes sour in his throat. That's a surprise. A real surprise. He would have thought she'd leave something—the wicker set, the planters, a lamp or two—but even the curtains are gone. In fact, he realizes with a shock, none of the windows seem to have curtains—or



"Did she defang him or did he come already defanged?"

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blinds, either. What is she thinking? Is she crazy?

Cursing under his breath, he jabs the key in the lock and twists, but nothing happens. He jerks it back out, angry now, impatient, and examines the flat, shining indented surface: no, it's the right key, the same key he's been using for sixteen years. Once again. Nothing. It won't even turn. The truth, ugly, frightening, has begun to dawn on him, even as he swings round on his heels and finds himself staring into the black unblinking gaze of Susan Certaine.

"You, you changed the locks," he accuses, and his hands are trembling.

Susan Certaine merely stands there, the briefcase at her feet, two mammoth softbound books clutched under her arms, books the size of unabridged dictionaries. She's in black, as usual, a no-nonsense business suit growing out of sensible heels, her cheeks brushed ever so faintly with blusher. "A little early, aren't we?" she says.

"You changed the locks."

She waits a beat, unhurried, in control. "What did you expect? We really can't have people interfering with our cataloguing, can we? You'd be surprised how desperate some people get, Mr. Laxner. And when you ran out on your therapy . . . Well, we just couldn't take the chance." A thin, pinched smile. "Not to worry: I've got your new keys right here—two sets, one for you and one for Marsha."

Her heels click on the pavement, three businesslike strides, and she's standing right beside him on the steps, crowding him. "Here, will you take these, please?" she says, dumping the books in his arms and digging into her briefcase for the keys.

The books are like dumbbells, scrap iron, so heavy Julian can feel the pull in his shoulders. "God, they're heavy," he mutters. "What are they?"

She fits the key in the lock and pauses, her face inches from his. "Your life, Mr. Laxner. The biography of your things. Did you know that you owned five hundred and forty-two wire hangers, sixty-seven wooden ones, and a hundred and sixty-nine plastic? Over two hundred flower pots? Six hundred doilies? Pot holders, Mr. Laxner. You logged in over one hundred twenty—can *you imagine that?* Can you imagine anyone needing a hundred and twenty pot holders? Excess, Mr. Laxner." He watches her lip curl. "Filthy excess."

The key takes, the tumblers turn, the door swings open. "Here you are, Mr. Laxner, *organization*," she cries, throwing her arms out. "Welcome to your new life."

Staggering under the burden of his catalogues, Julian moves across the barren porch and into the house, and here he has a second shock: the place is empty. Denuded. There's nothing left, not even a chair to sit in. Bewildered, he turns to her, but she's already moving past him, whirling round the room, her arms spread wide. He's begun to sweat. The scent of Sen-Sen hangs heavy in the air. "But there's nothing here," he stammers, bending down to set the catalogues on the stripped floorboards. "I thought . . . Well, I thought you'd pare it down, organize things so we could live here more comfortably, adjust, I mean—"

"Halfway measures, Mr. Laxner?" she says, skating up to him on the newly waxed floors. "Are halfway measures going to save a man—and woman—who own three hundred and nine bookends, forty-seven rocking chairs, over two thousand plates, cups, and saucers? This is tabula rasa, Mr. Laxner, square one. Did you know you owned a hundred and thirty-seven dead penlight batteries? Do you really need a hundred and thirty-seven dead penlight batteries, Mr. Laxner? Do you?"

"No, but"—backing off now, distraught, his den, his den— "but we need the basics, at least. Furniture. A TV. My, my textbooks. My scopes."

The light through the unshaded windows is harsh, unforgiving. Every corner is left naked to scrutiny, every board, every nail. "All taken care of, Mr. Laxner, no problem." Susan Certaine stands there in the glare of the window, hands on her hips. "Each couple is allowed to reclaim one item per day from the warehouse—anything you like—for a period of sixty days. Depending on how you exercise your options, that could be as many as sixty items. Most couples request a bed first, and to accommodate them we consider a bed one item—mattress, box spring, headboard and all."

Julian is stunned. "Sixty items? You're joking."

"I never joke, Mr. Laxner. Never."

"And what about the rest—the furniture, the stereo, our clothes?"

"Read your contract, Mr. Laxner."

He can feel himself slipping. "I don't want to read the contract, damn it. I asked you a question."

"Page 278, paragraph two. I quote: 'After expiration of the sixty-day grace period, all items to be sold at auction, the proceeds going to Certaine Enterprises, Inc., for charitable distribution, charities to be chosen at the sole discretion of the above-named corporation.'" Her eyes are on him, severe, hateful, bright with triumph. This is what it's all about, this—cutting people down to size, squashing them. "You'd be surprised how many couples never recall a thing, not a single item."

"No," Julian says, stalking across the room. "No, I won't stand for it. I won't. I'll sue."

She shrugs. "I won't even bother to remind you to listen to yourself. You're like the brat on the playground—you don't like the way the game goes, you take your bat and ball and go home, right? Go ahead, sue. You'll find it won't be so easy. You signed the contract, Mr. Laxner. Both of you."

There's a movement in the open doorway. Shadow and light. Marsha. Marsha and Dr. Hauskopf, frozen there on the doorstep, watching. "Julian," Marsha cries, and then she's in his arms, clinging to him as if he were the last thing in the world, the only thing left her.

Dr. Doris and Susan Certaine exchange a look. "Be happy," Susan Certaine says after a moment. "Think of that couple in Ethiopia." And then they're gone.

Julian doesn't know how long he stands there, in the middle of that barren room in the silence of that big empty house, holding Marsha, holding his wife, but when he shuts his eyes he sees only the sterile deeps of space, the remotest regions beyond even the reach of light. And he knows this: it is cold out there, inhospitable, alien. There's nothing there, nothing contained in nothing. Nothing at all. ♦

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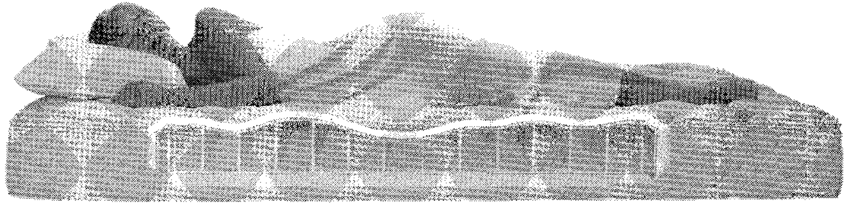

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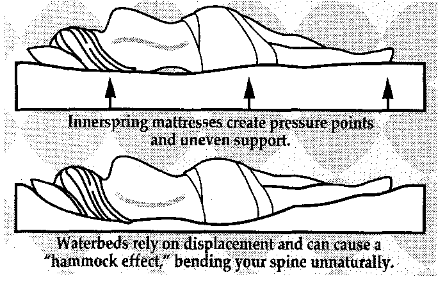

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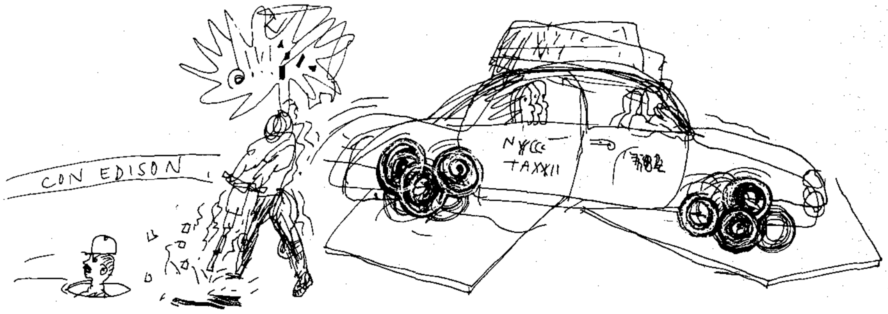
COUCH REPORTER

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE

A sentimental journey crash-lands on the sidewalks of New York.

BY HAROLD BRODKEY



FILIP PAGOWSKI

IMAGINE a couch reporter travelling. A flying couch, a miniature R.V. that allowed you to take your own life with you wherever you went, would be fine, but reality is cruel. Consider, I ask you, the postures and detailed discomfort of a tall couch potato on a medium-sized jet or even a jumbo, that flying slum. Then the return to New York after three months abroad, trying to relocate the walls of your apartment and to remember and set in place the intricate system of assertions and responses, the mental and physical aggressions, that are necessary in this city, that you don't use as a tourist passing through a place.

Each place my wife and I went to—Berlin, Venice, Rome—has its own inner systems of interlocking aggressions and violences, its famous culture of them. I became attuned to the gladiatorial spirit at Rome's Fiumicino airport and to the grim, order-giving xenophobia at Tegel, in Berlin. New York systems don't work in those towns—you get out of practice with New York systems, unless you stay in hotels that specialize in your class and nationality. Mostly, nationalities ghettoize themselves by choice when they travel. But if you've been a tourist immersed in other places for three months the return to Manhattan, the home ghetto of choice—bitter cabdrivers, high-pressure face-lifted old ladies, mad landlords, and hard-edged homeless—it's like being dipped in Hell, especially when you're jet-lagged.

The Nietzschean self-assertion of the locals is part of the mystic wonder of New York. And this begins in the overwhelmingly strange experience of using a New York airport. What do you suppose makes the customs guards and the guides who indicate which window you go to with your passport so sad? The aggressions of ethnic groups begin at Kennedy. This time, a flying squad of Wasp heroines pushed into the line of people waiting for taxis and had to be chased off by a Russian-speaker in a golfing hat and Day-Glo wheelchair with a phenomenally militant sense of justice. Earlier, Italians were taking over the best places along the conveyor belt for luggage, elbowing you, looking at you piteously. Or taking over vast sections of the airport for greeting, and warmheartedly blocking all the exits from the luggage area into the daylight. And the silently angry French people in really good clothes were cutting across your path with their luggage carts.

If your taxi-driver is not aggressive, you will never get out of Kennedy Airport, since people shamelessly block the crosswalks and ignore the lights. No one coöperates. Kind liberals in cars who refuse to edge forward into the shameless mass cause gridlock at the intersections.

The visual blight along the roads has behind it the great secret that a glimpse of the incredible Manhattan skyline is coming, the towers under a large sky, airplane-dotted, and with wheeling sea-birds, and bustling with clouds and light, including a glowing pale-yellow corona of pollution around the towers themselves.

In narrow side streets and at the lights occur traffic confrontations, negotiations, bluster, and jockeying. Surely treeless Manhattan is the home of the bald ego, the American national bird.

Different styles of aggression seem to be basic to gender. The virility syndrome is different from the exoticism of the being-not-male-and-to-be-looked-at syndrome that women labor under. New York women either deny or exaggerate the exoticism element. Denial and exaggeration, and male and female distrust of them, underlie much of New York's psychoanalytic culture. But what is most striking on a return here after a long absence is the extreme obviousness of male assertion, beginning with the size and shape of the skyscrapers, the behavior of truck drivers, the partly sly, half-mad swagger of some of the male homeless, and the often unconvincing humility of others.

A crisis of the virility thing is apparent everywhere in the world. For instance, the reunification of Germany means for the more or less unemployable men of the East a loss of their women to—let's say—capitalist practices. If the men then establish a style of violent virility, it is as comprehensible as is their fear of the rape of their women and contamination of them by foreigners, by Jews, when there are no Jews around—the term "Jew" in Austria and Germany and Italy, in France and England and Spain being taken by the right-wing movements to mean a new style of *successful* masculinity, unviolent, modern, and sophisticated and moneyed and sympathetic to women. The actual war between the old and the new specifically involves the standards for virility and relations—or, in a primitive sense, for access—to women. Italian television is lunatic about the escape of women from the old social controls.

In New York, male pretensions and female ones—women having their own exotic visual compromises and degrees of rebellion against being visual symbols—suffer particularly. It is almost impossible in New York to be rich enough for comfort in regard to your own gender. You have to be so rich—as in having your own plane or chauffeur, the lucky ones being whisked off by a retainer—that you are part of the general scene only in a small way, glancingly.

But those of us who are not that rich do not exactly return to New York. We return to a fortress segment of it, a willfully isolated, specialized part of it. And our exposure to the city's violence of spirit is determined by our style.

Drenched in momentary inadequacy and adrenaline, I arrived at my apartment house. The doorman on duty was the Hindu guy. The Guatemalan doorman of the earlier shift was just leaving, dressed in his helmet and quilted Tyvek jacket; he has a BMW motorcycle. The Romanian doorman, who has our mailbox key, wasn't there. The boiler was "half broken." Polish workmen were pounding on the roof. The Sunday *Times* when I bought it was missing the book-review and style sections, which I took as advice on what not to bother reading. The local macrobiotic restaurant was crowded with people dealing macrobiotically with the virility and exoticism factors. The wind was cold and aggressive. The lassitude, the listlessness of Manhattan mark the era as one of waiting for a style, waiting for an economic direction to declare itself.

Anton, the Romanian doorman, is a genuinely competitive human being. He has about as much sense of social class as an elephant does. But he has an exceptionally alert sense of power, and he is very aware of menace. When I am jet-lagged, I can read my condition in how he acts—whether he is maternal or dodgy, amused or respectful.

He said when I saw him, "Well, are you ready for the madness here?" ♦

LETTERS WE NEVER FINISHED READING

[*From the newsletter of the Marshdale Elementary School, in Evergreen, Colo.*]

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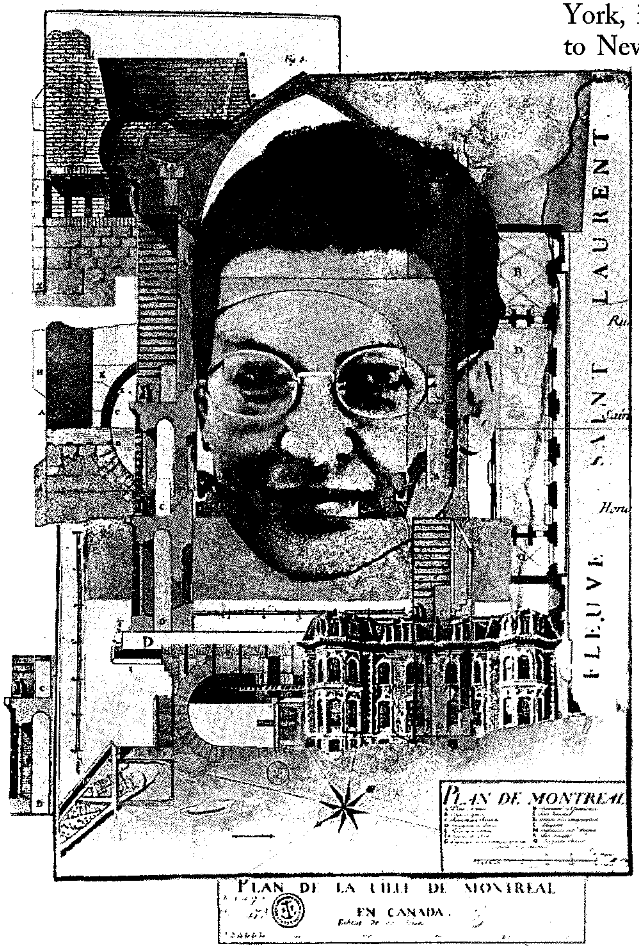
THE CRITICS

THE SKY LINE

OPENING THE GATES

BY BRENDAN GILL



O Montreal! Phyllis Lambert, the founder of the Canadian Centre for Architecture.

DIANA CRAFT

JUST over an hour by air from Manhattan lies one of the largest and most interesting cities on the continent—Montreal, a centuries-old, gray-hued, stone-clad metropolis, which, for reasons I find hard to fathom, most New Yorkers remain invincibly ignorant of. Montreal enjoys the romantic advantages of being the city that is second to Paris in the number of its French-speaking inhabitants, of being ruled by laws and customs some of which date back to Louis XIV, of having preserved much of its ancient urban architecture, and of occupying an incomparable location on the shores of what is surely the mightiest of North American rivers—the deep and tumultuous St. Lawrence. (Next to the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, though prodigious in length, strikes me as a comparatively tame-looking body of water, threading its hesitant way through the heart of the country.)

The stubborn failure of New Yorkers to acquaint themselves with Montreal has an element of the perverse about it, for the two cities have a number of things in common. They were founded in the seventeenth century as trading posts, on small islands that were welcomely easy to fortify. They grew rich through commerce and became great ports, thanks in part to canals dug to link their transatlantic shipping with that of the Great Lakes—the Lachine Canal in Canada, the Erie Canal in the States. They have long been centers of banking and insurance in their own countries, and as their populations have mounted into the millions their polyglot cultures have made them more and more difficult to govern. As yet, however, these shared attributes have failed to establish a bond between the cities; geographically a near neighbor of New York, in every other respect Montreal to New Yorkers is still Ultima Thule.

So I sense that my praise of an exhibition now being held at Montreal's Canadian Centre for Architecture will cause few New Yorkers to drop whatever they may be doing and race northward to immerse themselves in the subject matter of the exhibition: the founding of Montreal, the development of its fortifications by French military engineers, the dismantling of those fortifications in the early years of the nineteenth century, the concomitant growth of the city as a center of trade, and the transformations in land use and domestic architecture which this continuous growth entailed. A dry-as-dust subject except to scholars working in the field? So one might suppose, but in fact the exhibition is a model not only of scholarly research, carried out over fifteen years, but also of curatorial prowess in the display of sculpture, paintings, drawings, and maps—maps that are among the most beautiful ever drawn, and, though they were originally intended to assist in accomplishing certain harsh military ends in the Canadian wilderness, are today quite simply irresistible as works of art.

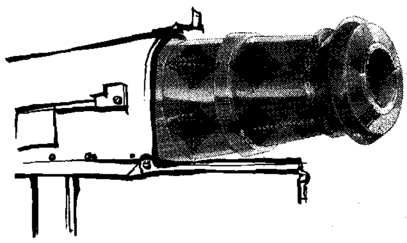
The exhibition, called "Opening the

Gates of Eighteenth-Century Montréal," has been timed to help celebrate the three-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the city's founding, and its co-curators are Alan Stewart and Phyllis Lambert. Mr. Stewart is a member of the staff of the Canadian Centre for Architecture. As for Ms. Lambert, it is often said of her, and with reason, that she *is* the Canadian Centre for Architecture. The only independent institution in the world devoted to the art of architecture and its history, the Centre defines itself as fostering "the understanding of architectural ideas through advanced research, public exhibitions, scholarly publications, and conferences" and as having been "founded on the conviction that architecture, as part of the social and natural environment, is a public concern." The words give off an authentic Lambertian ring. One can be sure that what Lambert perceives as a public concern will become for her a personal cause, passionately championed. The Centre, which came into being in 1979, is a gift first of all to Montreal, her native city, and then to the world at large—a gift increasingly vast in scale as the Centre gathers up into its archives a collection of rare and diverse architectural materials (drawings, photographs, blueprints, account books, diaries, correspondence, and even architectural tools and furniture). Its library is rivalled only by the Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, at Columbia University; the Royal Institute of British Architects, in London; and the Getty Center, in Santa Monica. Given the venerableness of Avery and the Royal Institute and the financial resources of the Getty, the speed with which Lambert's Centre has caught up with them—and in some areas already surpassed them—is matter for astonishment and awe in academic circles.

It might be surmised that the Centre's exceptional speed in making acquisitions was a matter only of money, but Lambert's spunky, hard-driving spirit is of equal importance, manifesting an attitude toward finances which is shared by few of her fellow-collectors. They have a tendency to grow timid in the presence of an inescapable fact: that the amount of money needed to buy rarities rises as the number of rarities that remain to be bought dwindles. Lambert shows no sign of being distressed by this iron law. "We are not market-oriented," she says, with the equanimity of one who is in possession of great wealth and is free to spend it however she pleases. Some years ago, the Centre paid a hundred and seventy thousand dollars for a photograph of Wall Street taken in 1915 by Paul Strand—said at the time of the purchase to have been the highest price ever paid for a single photograph. And why not? It was, after all, indispensable to the Centre's collection of architectural photographs, which goes back to the birth of photography, in 1839.

Lambert is understandably at ease in the presence of large sums. Born in 1927, she is the daughter of one of the richest businessmen of our time, the late Samuel Bronfman, who, as chairman of the board of the Joseph E. Seagram & Sons Company, was frequently described in the press as "the billionaire whiskey baron." When the Centre opened its new headquarters building, almost four years ago, it was reported to have cost something like forty million dollars, of which by far the greater part was contributed by Lambert (and the rest by the government); its contents have certainly cost twice that sum. The Centre has a staff of a hundred and twenty people, and the burden of its annual budget, of seven or eight million dollars, is borne mostly by Lambert; moreover, she has provided the Centre with an endowment that will insure its utility to future generations. With characteristic brusque candor, she says of her expenditures, "Look, it is very simple. I inherited the money, on the one hand, and I am fascinated by the possibilities of education, on the other. So I have combined the two ingredients."

Bronfman—universally known as Mr. Sam—was small, chunky, and dark-haired, and he and his daughter were markedly alike in appearance, intellect, high energy, and hot temper. People have said in criticism of Lambert that she has the instincts of a teacher without a teacher's patience; she retorts (impatiently) that the very qualities that men are praised for are those for which a woman is damned. Because she takes strong stands, and because, like any person who takes strong stands, she believes them to be the right ones, she is the sort of person who is invariably pigeonholed as controversial. St. Paul speaks of the ability to suffer fools gladly; Lambert is



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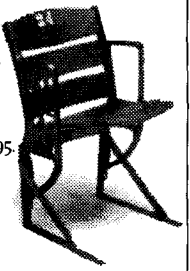

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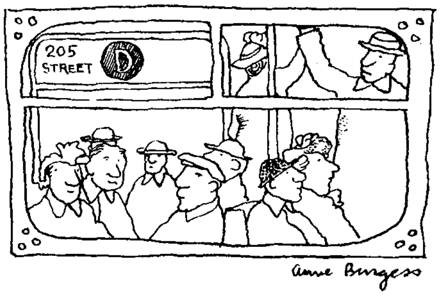
too importunate—perhaps too imperial—to suffer even quite intelligent people gladly on matters about which they inexplicably choose to disagree with her. And the fact of the matter is that her victories in architecture and historic preservation have been many and well-earned, her defeats few.

Lambert gained a precocious fame among architects when—a Vassar graduate in her twenties, living in Paris and recently divorced from Jean Lambert, a French banker—she learned one day that her father had commissioned a workaday New York City firm to design a skyscraper office building for Seagram's on a choice Park Avenue blockfront in the Fifties. ("The design was mindless," she has said, "with no sense of scale or form.") At the time, she was studying painting and sculpture, not architecture; nevertheless, in a letter to her father that is reputed to have been several thousand words long, Lambert indignantly protested that Seagram's should set a higher aesthetic standard in its New York headquarters. More in the role of father than in that of businessman or aesthetician, Mr. Sam gave way to a daughter's vehemence and permitted her to choose the architect for the building. In consultation with Philip Johnson, then the director of the architecture department of the Museum of Modern Art, Lambert recommended that the job go to the expatriate Bauhaus architect Mies van der Rohe. The time was the early fifties, and Mies was teaching in Chicago, at what was then called the Armour Institute. (It is now the Illinois Institute of Technology.) His work was largely unknown in New York; it was certainly unknown to Mr. Sam. With Johnson serving as his local associate, Mies set about designing the Seagram Building, which was completed in 1958 and is still considered the handsomest of all our postwar skyscrapers.

Lambert moved to New York in order to serve as director of planning on the Seagram project. (Johnson has described how the girlish Lambert would bully a roomful of powerful men into giving Mies whatever expensive refinement he felt his design called for.) After the building was finished, Lambert decided to make architecture her vocation as well as her avocation. She studied at Yale and under Mies at the Illinois Institute of Technology, where she earned a master's degree in architecture. In the years that followed, she worked on half a dozen projects, sometimes as the architect in charge and sometimes as a consultant. These projects include her design for the Saidye Bronfman Centre, a Jewish cultural center in Montreal, donated by her family and named for her mother, which won the coveted Massey Medal of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, and the restoration of the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel, for which she received a National Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects.

When it came time to build the new Centre, Lambert chose a Montreal architect, Peter Rose, then in his late thirties, to design it, with Erol Argun as associate architect, reserving for herself the nominally less assertive role of consulting architect. Still, nobody doubts that her stamp is on every inch of the structure. It has been suggested, indeed, that the exterior of the building, with its modest height (two stories above grade, two below), its sturdy bush-hammered limestone cladding, and its austere detailing, resembles to a startling degree the physical and mental traits of its donor. Similar resemblances have been detected in the interior, not always with approbation. An art critic from the States who finds the Centre's plan and appearance too coolly rational for his taste says, "When I walk those very long, straight corridors, when I enter those square rooms, when I sense the narrow limits of Phyllis's palette—white, gray, brown, but mostly white, white, white—I feel as if she were disciplining me for some schoolboy impertinence that I have no recollection of having committed. At my age, this can be disconcerting."

Architecture critics have expressed a more positive view of the Centre. When it opened, Paul Goldberger, writing in the *Times*, called it "a building of quiet dignity and great strength that weaves together several generations of architecture with considerable grace . . . a building that is refreshingly indifferent to stylistic labels." Susan Doubilet wrote in *Progressive Architecture* that it was "a masterwork for masterpieces . . . the fruit of an exquisite collaboration between architect and patron, each with professional experience both broad and deep."



If the Centre building accurately reflects Lambert's personality (even to the point of nowhere bearing her name), so does the site she chose for it. Some years ago, she wrote of the site:

> The building of the CCA is situated at the western end of the city, at the foot of Mount Royal, in one of the two oldest sections of the city. A stone fort, built here before 1695 by the Sulpicians [a French religious order that at one time owned much of Montreal], antedates by a generation the beginnings of the stone fortifications of the city. . . . During the eighteenth century and most of the nineteenth century the area, with its fields, farms, orchards, and villas, was known as the "*paradis terrestre*," earthly paradise.

During the Victorian period, that particular earthly paradise became a fashionable residential district. By the middle of the twentieth century, fashion had moved elsewhere and the serried ranks of stout graystone Victorian mansions had fallen upon hard times. When the Ville-Marie Autoroute cut through a portion of the district, it threatened to destroy the district as a whole. One of the grandest of the houses, a Second Empire mansion that had belonged to a nineteenth-century railroad magnate, Lord Shaughnessy, was about to be demolished. In 1973, Lambert, who had already helped to found two organizations—Save Montréal and Heritage Montréal—to counter the reckless bulldozing and obliteration of much of Montreal's early built environment, bought the Shaughnessy mansion and the desolate parcel of land upon which it sat. Entrance and exit ramps serving the Autoroute pinched the site to the east and west; to the south, between the mansion and its once noble view of the St. Lawrence River and the distant Adirondacks, lay the busy René-Lévesque Boulevard (then called Dorchester Boulevard), the still busier Autoroute, and a stretch of low-income housing and industrial wasteland.

Six years after the Shaughnessy purchase, Lambert founded the Centre, and

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by the early eighties it had outgrown its first quarters, in Lambert's own residence, which she had ingeniously whittled out of an abandoned peanut warehouse on the Rue Bonsecours, in the old quarter of the city. Lambert decided to restore Shaughnessy House and make it a part of the Centre's new headquarters. The building would be constructed behind and on either side of the mansion, holding it in an embrace so light—so nearly imperceptible—as not to impair its integrity as a historic landmark. Today, the Shaughnessy mansion, restored under the direction of the architect Denis Saint-Louis, admirably serves as offices for the Centre and as the venue for such social occasions as the Centre is expected to undertake in connection with exhibitions and with lectures and concerts in its auditorium, and similar non-scholarly events. Across from the mansion, between René-Lévesque and the Ville-Marie Autoroute, Lambert has created a park, out of which rises the ground-floor façade—and only the façade—of a graystone twin of Shaughnessy House. The nature of this superlative folly is invariably a subject of speculation for motorists whizzing by on René-Lévesque Boulevard: within its mysterious time warp, is it a house being constructed or a house being torn down? Sharing the park with this ambiguous ghost are a number of contemporary works in steel-and-stone-and-concrete by Melvin Charney, a local sculptor and architect.

I HAVE spent a windswept winter morning walking through the C.C.A. with Lambert. Now we are being served lunch in the lofty dining room of Shaughnessy House. Across René-Lévesque, the little park and its folly are scarcely visible through whirligigs of snow. During much of the year, Montreal is gray upon gray—a hundred shades of gray, from charcoal to dove; all winter long, it is white. "This weather is how we like it here, it isn't in the least depressing to us," Lambert says, in her usual rapid-fire manner. The quickness of her mind is celebrated; so is the quickness of her utterance. Having been involved for so many years in ferreting out and preparing written descriptions of the hundreds of rare items that make up the "Opening the Gates" exhibition, Lambert is genially full of her subject, and I am grateful to find that, with a morning's practice, I have learned to translate the lightning of Lambertese into comprehensible English. "I *love* Montreal!" she exclaims. "To make people see it not only as it exists today but as it has been in history, through so many transformations—Amerindian, French, British. That's what inspired the exhibition and kept us all slaves to its creation. Like any native, I had to escape from the city in order to come back to it, isn't that always the case? Don't you agree? You *do* see that? Yes?" Behind gold-rimmed spectacles, her dark eyes command agreement. She goes on, gaining speed, "I grew up in a big red brick house in Westmount, where my mother still lives." Westmount is an Anglophone residential enclave that climbs the steep slopes of Mount Royal. "When I returned, in the seventies, I found the city busily discarding its architectural heritage. Nor was it particularly aware that it was doing so. Imagine it! Not to be aware of such an act of idiocy! But things are better now. People are beginning to protest that we save too much—always a good sign, don't you think? Yes? *Yes*? And the success of the Centre—that will help Montreal to realize itself as a great city. Architects and architectural historians will come to us because they need to, and later they will come because they want to. And after them will come the tourists. That will be fine with me."

A secretary tiptoes in to whisper that Lambert is running late—she has a class in architecture to teach at one of the local universities. Lambert utters an expletive and tosses aside her napkin. "Forgive me, but I find myself always behaving in this fashion, always having to fly off somewhere, isn't it frightful? What can I be thinking of?" She has leaped from her chair and is loping across the room to the hall doorway. Then she turns for a final volley: "My friend Irving Lavin compares me to a hurricane, but, oh, I hope not! Hurricanes are so undisciplined, so unreasonable, surely not my style at all! Was Irving making fun of me? No matter! I am *very* late. Enjoy your dessert! Goodbye! Goodbye!" And off she darts, a vigorous, sparrowy figure, into the winter afternoon. ♦

THE CURRENT CINEMA

GOTTA TANGO!

BY ANTHONY LANE

MICHAELE VOLLBRACH

Hot feet: Tara Morice and Paul Mercurio in "Strictly Ballroom."

WHAT do you need to know about the new Australian movie "Strictly Ballroom"? That it's a tall tale of a young smoothy versus the old guard. That it really *is* about ballroom dancing. That it concerns the triumph of hope over repression, love over fear, sequins over bosoms. That it was choreographed by a man listed as John "Cha Cha" O'Connell. Yes, it's *that* kind of film. Ballroom dancing is a great, unattainable subject for the movies—especially the full-blown Latin style we get here. The very look of it teeters somewhere between "Star Trek" and Restoration comedy, and the conduct of its devotees is no different—a barely comprehensible code of alien mannerisms. No other pastime is quite so sensationally silly, and however hard you try, you can never quite match its glory. War films have the same problem.

The director is Baz Luhrmann, who devised the original theatre production of "Strictly Ballroom," in Sydney, and he's managed to boil away the staginess and leave the energy intact. Luhrmann had never made a movie before, and, in a way, you can't see him making another one; it could only dilute the concentration. He sets about his task at high speed, driving us straight to the dance floor and a whirl of competing couples. Their smiles are nailed in place, their clothes all the colors of the rainbow, plus a few from elsewhere. As for the music, how can any filmmaker still dive into "The Blue Danube" and hope to get away with it? But that's precisely the point. Luhrmann pulls up every dry old cliché he can think of, drags it into the hothouse of his movie, and makes it bloom.

All this looks like mood-setting, but in fact it fires the opening shot of the plot. Couple No. 100 get boxed in, and something snaps: the woman stands helpless, the man goes crazy. His name is Scott Hastings, and while everyone else on the floor is obeying rules laid down by the Dance Federation he makes up new ones as he goes along. He's showing off, all right, but then so is Baz Luhrmann; the action slows and quickens like a pulse, switching between the druggy and the breakneck, and the camera swipes pure color across the screen, soft-grained as sugar, as it fights to keep pace with Scott. The editing duels with

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his flying figure, jabbing at him from every angle. (The days of "Shall We Dance," when Fred and Ginger could perform a whole number on roller skates with only one cut, halfway through, are long gone.) Meanwhile, almost without our noticing, the opening waltz has given way to a frantic samba—the dance where you make love standing up.

Then, right in the middle, Luhrmann slams to a halt and cuts to an interview: two middle-aged folk sitting on a sofa, perhaps the least dancelike position known to man. Other directors have sprung this technique on us—Warren Beatty in "Reds," Rob Reiner in "When Harry Met Sally . . ."—but for them it worked as oblique commentary on the film, ironic grace notes over the main theme. Luhrmann pushes it right in our faces, camped up and cut for laughs. The people in question are Scott's parents, Doug (Barry Otto) and Shirley (Pat Thomson), and they can't understand what the boy is trying to do. "Where did I go wrong?" wails his toothy mother. Back and forth we go, between the spinning Scott and a sullen bevy of critics: his coach, Les Kendall (Peter Whitford); his partner, Liz (Gia Carides); and the President of the Dance Federation, Barry Fife (Bill Hunter). These are the dramatis personae, unveiled for inspection in the first ten minutes. You should be wincing at the glare of it all, the cheap simplistic shine, yet somehow the bravado is even brighter. If you stopped to think, you'd realize you were being taken for a ride; but you don't think, and the film keeps rushing you along.

Under the glitz, "Strictly Ballroom" is selling us a plain slab of fairy tale. Nobody wants Scott to go his own way, inventing fresh routines, but all the more reason for him to press on; you can sniff the triumph ninety minutes off. No movie that includes Doris Day chanting "Perhaps, Perhaps, Perhaps" is going to add much to the sum of human melancholy. Luhrmann's galloping sense of humor can't quite disguise the slow arc of yearning in the narrative, or the direction in which it's heading. This wasn't always the case with dance movies: Fred and Ginger were snared by some pretty dumb plots in their time, but that dumbness was a wispy variation on screwball—two dippy people forever falling out and patching up. They're grownups—fooling around, sure, and

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keen to prove their love, but with nothing to prove to themselves. All's well that moves well, and the tapping heels are like a drumroll to announce their happiness. Now we have films like "Fame" and "Flashdance," gawky wet dreams whose characters are ashamed to dance for the hell of it; they have to dance for their own good, for the hope of better things. Fred Astaire would have been pushed to see how things *could* get better. They were just fine, thanks.

"Strictly Ballroom" is of the modern school, but with a saving grace: it can't find the time for sentimentality. Nobody would call it debonair, but it does have the wit to make fun of its own exotic rapture. It feels explosive yet modest, never too pleased with the atmosphere it evokes. Luhrmann's hero is a big help: in the hands of Paul Mercurio, Scott is just what the movie ordered—sexy, strutting, and a complete joke. Not for him the wounded, wondering narcissism of Travolta. With a comma of dark hair flopping over his forehead, Mercurio has the kind of ludicrous good looks you see in fashion magazines, where two or three guys clench their Germanic jaws and gaze with fascination into the middle distance. He has to appear onscreen wearing bolero tops, shirts snipped open to the waist, and pants so tight you have to put them on with a shoehorn. The glistening jacket he shrugs into at the finale is supposed to remind us of a matador; actually, it looks more like a lunar module—one of the early ones, wrapped in gold foil. Yet Mercurio wears it well; he knows that we want to laugh at him, but never lets on, and so the laughter is topped with respect.

Needless to say, he falls in love, and goes swanning around with an ugly duckling called Fran (Tara Morice). When we first see her, she is wearing chunky spectacles with transparent frames and has a rash of spots across her face. (Only Australian film stars, I've noticed, have the courage to look like this. If you don't believe me, go and see John Duigan's sweet but pustulent "Flirting.") The floor of the dance school is alive with twin souls, but Fran moves around alone, one arm outstretched, the other clasping the slender waist of an invisible man. "I've only been dancing two years," she says brightly to the camera. "So I don't have a partner yet." On comes her dream boy, the moping Scott: one glance from him, and you can see her complexion starting to clear. By the end, you think, this girl will be wearing flamenco skirts and drinking deep of the crowd's acclaim. And you're right.

It's odd when she takes him home. For one thing, "Strictly Ballroom," true to its title, isn't the kind of movie where people *have* homes. Or jobs, for that matter. When you glimpse one of Scott's rivals dressed in overalls and working at a garage, you don't believe it for a second, any more than you believed that Gene Kelly could hack it as a painter in Paris. The film depends on the delightful lie that Australians could exist on earth purely to dance. Even back at Fran's house, the family appears to spend most of its time acting out scenes from old Carlos Saura movies. Fran, it turns out, is actually of Spanish blood, which will come as news to most of the audience. It's a shameless detour in the plot, designed to give Scott some free tuition on his *paso doble* and Luhrmann a chance to tighten his closeups: he holds on the dusty, thumping heels of the expert, then zooms in on Scott's face as admiration dawns.

When it comes to closeups, Luhrmann doesn't so much scan the map of feeling as force it into shape—shoving the camera under everyone's jowls, lighting people like vampires, and asking them to quake with indignation until you can see the screen bulge. The perspiring Barry Fife, in particular, seems to have emigrated to Australia from a George Grosz painting. He nearly suffocates from overkill, the same recklessness that Luhrmann applies to the one flashback scene—a disastrous descent into white-faced mime. The movie is hectic enough as it is, and any attempt to make the satire match the spirit of the dance is doomed to sourness. That's why you revel in the rare breakthrough of peace. Just occasionally, Luhrmann pulls his camera back and takes the long view—nothing to distract our attention, just a moment for this breathless world to compose itself, and us with it. As Fran's household dances the daylight away,

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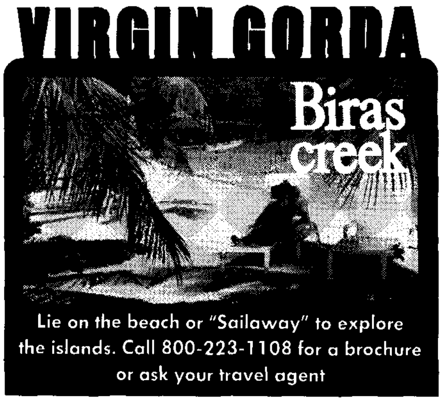

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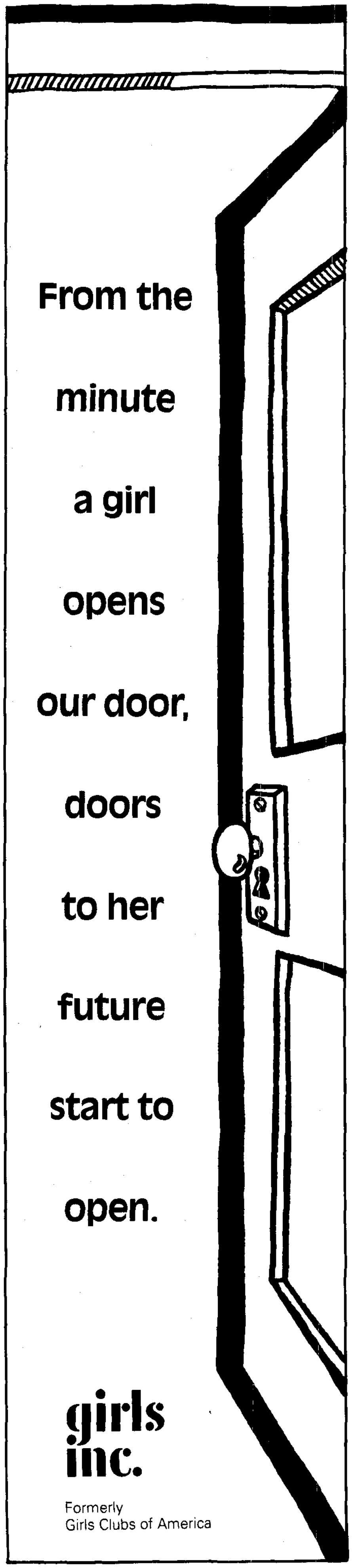
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merrily fulfilling its cultural stereotype, the camera consigns it to a corner of the frame and fills the other half with a slow, snaking train. Someone must be driving that train, you think; there is, after all, a life elsewhere. Even lovelier are the upstairs-downstairs shots: we look through the studio window, to where Scott's father shimmies quietly by himself, then travel smoothly up to the roof, where the son is practicing steps with Fran, against the glow of a Coca-Cola billboard.

The climax is, in a sense, a repeat of the beginning, with an extra dash of good fortune. "Strictly Ballroom" is a film without surprises, yet a shock of well-being still rises to meet you—the corny old slap of satisfaction at seeing justice done, and the implausible pattern of pleasure completed. This is so strong that you *almost* don't balk at the appearance of "Love Is in the Air" on the soundtrack. It's like Strauss all over again. Maybe Baz Luhrmann went through his record collection and picked out the top tacky numbers from every musical genre, just to see what the movie would let him get away with. For many people, the answer is "Almost anything." The movie was even a huge hit at Cannes last year. You could wallow at a midnight screening, then get up the next morning, trudge off to your early screening of the new Latvian barley-famine pic, and seriously believe you'd dreamed the whole thing. I've seen it twice now, and on both occasions the audience trilled and clapped at the end. I got out quickly in case they started to hug. "Strictly Ballroom" is fun, but it's compulsory fun; it kidnaps your emotions and carries them away.

TONY BILL'S "Untamed Heart" is shy and inoffensive, as if it had just woken up after sleeping all winter. It's a doomy love story: boy (Christian Slater) meets girl (Marisa Tomei), but boy has something wrong with his heart, and time is running out. They should put a warning at the start of any movie about heart trouble: Caution, wild metaphor on the loose. Nevertheless, this particular tale unfurls with some grace; I admired Tony Bill for setting it in a small-time Minneapolis diner and having the courage to stay there. The talk is equally small, and Bill's attempts to open it up and spread it around—a couple of random guys discussing their fishing bait, say—are an embarrassing dribble. He's much happier bunching his main waitresses together at a table, encircled by a prowling camera, and letting them josh back and forth. Given that they are played by Tomei and Rosie Perez (a perky loudmouth in both "Night on Earth" and "White Men Can't Jump"), this isn't too difficult. At one point, they even have a fight—serious stuff, with napkins and straws being hurled very short distances—for no reason at all. The love story moves you, though in a conventional direction—toward fulfillment and pathos. Much more interesting, in a way, is the boredom. What else is there to do in such a place except talk, and maybe throw napkins? The will to enjoy yourself when there isn't much to enjoy, to smoke on a skating rink, to toy with the idea of passion instead of leaping into it—such are the sparks that make "Untamed Heart" flare into life. "I'm gonna fall in love with you," says Tomei, in a typically trembling line. Is it a threat, a worry, or just a nice idea?

Christian Slater is suspiciously at ease playing a hairy simpleton, but the main reason to see the movie is Marisa Tomei and her wide eyes. After "My Cousin Vinny," Tomei can do no wrong, and here she does a whole lot right. Any actress should be able to pull on a pair of jeans to the sound of Suzanne Vega (the annoyingly catchy "Tom's Diner"), but only Tomei would think to lie on her bed and make furious bicycling motions to do it. The jeans are pretty cheap, and you should see her in knit hat and white boots; but, though the role is dowdy, she dresses it up with the sheer glamour of her comedy—all the glinting possibilities she plucks out of nowhere. Together with Geena Davis and Annette Bening, Tomei forms a lustrous regiment of women to match the brainy flirts of the thirties and forties. (If only they had the leading men to match.) Offered ice cream, she squeals for joy, then says no, actually, she doesn't want any. But in that instant the joy is real; she can run through a cadenza of tiny feelings in the time that it takes most performers to crank up a single smile. "Untamed Heart" simply passes the time, but Tomei fills it with goodies. ♦

THE THEATRE

DIVINE INSPIRATION

BY EDITH OLIVER

MARYANN PLUNKETT, who time after time, in one supporting role after another, almost rescued the rickety National Actors Theatre during its first two seasons, is now rewarded with Shaw's "Saint Joan," at the Lyceum, and gives a radiant performance in a firm production under the direction of Michael Langham. The production has its ups and downs, but nothing and no one impedes the play from the moment that Joan confronts the wee, cowering timorous Dauphin of Michael Stuhlbarg. A country girl, yes, but hardly sturdy—more a flickering, flaming force. There is no doubt about the "voices" that inspire her, and, long before the fire devours her, there is no question of her sanctity.

I also admired the strong acting of Jay O. Sanders, as Dunois, the Bastard of Orleans, who, once won over, becomes Joan's companion at arms; Nicholas Kepros, as the icy Inquisitor, who, of course, defeats her; and Lorne Kennedy, in the sympathetic role of Brother Martin Ladvenu. Miss Plunkett, tiny and fighting for stature among the tall men who surround her (with the notable exception of His Highness, of course), is, one might suppose, an odd physical type for the heroine described in the text, but a look at Holly Hill's "Playing Joan," a collection of marvellous, enlightening interviews with twenty-six actresses who have played the role, puts any question about appropriate types to rest. Of all the interviews, by the way, my favorite is one with Wendy Hiller, who in 1936 took the part on very short notice and was directed by Shaw himself. There wasn't time for much discussion, and Shaw's direction seemed to consist entirely of telling her, more or less, "It's a good play, Wendy. Get on with it."

"THE BOILER ROOM," by Reuben Gonzalez, at the Puerto Rican Traveling Theatre, could be called a domestic comedy, but it's one built on a rough roadbed. The setting, one of Edward Gianfrancesco's miracles on a postage-stamp stage, is a gigantic boiler room in the basement of a tenement, which is the living room of the Puerto Rican superintendent (absent), his wife and daughter, and a teen-age son, who has dropped out of school and is starting a career of crime on the street. The story isn't much, but, as directed by Alex Colón, it's enough to carry some very amusing dialogue and some dialogue that is anything but. There are continual phone calls from the apartments above for the super, who, his wife tells the tenants, is "at the store," and one alarming call from a hospital, to say that the son has been shot. This scary development and a grisly revelation at the end keep the whole thing from dissolving into trivia.

ISADORE SELTZER

Finding a voice: Maryann Plunkett in Shaw's "Saint Joan."

Miriam Colón, as the worn-out, sharp, humorous mother, is, as usual, a pillar of strength (to family and cast), and the young actor Joe Quintero, as the teen-age son, is like a bolt of electricity. I didn't realize how frightened I'd been, and how the character had got to me, until Mr. Quintero came hobbling back in with a cane. He might keep Scapin in mind as he plans his future. ♦

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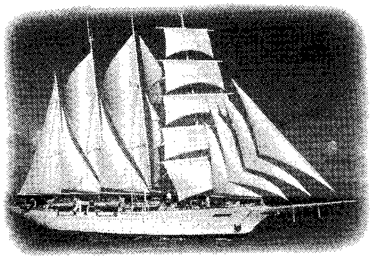

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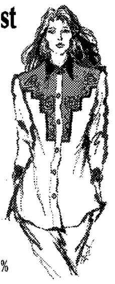

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MUSICAL EVENTS

SCHOENBERG'S EXPECTATION

BY PAUL GRIFFITHS

BRIAN GRIMWOOD

Arguments about proper opera production, fierce now, were no less so sixty-three years ago, when Schoenberg wrote to the director of the Berlin company due to stage his one-acter "Erwartung," cautioning him with characteristic severity, "I believe that you are *not* one of the producers who look at a work only in order to see how to make it into *something quite different.*" He went on, "Such a wrong could never be greater than if done to me, since while I was composing I had all the scenic effects in mind, seeing them with the utmost precision." He might have added that they didn't just stay in that interior theatre: his stage directions stipulate every setting and every move for the solitary character, the unnamed Woman looking for her lover at night in a forest, and his sketches for costume and décor further suggest that what he saw as he wrote was something dark and unsettling in the line of Edvard Munch.

Is a modern director at liberty to go for "something quite different"? Well, no, of course not—not if that's the intention. Schoenberg's formula begs the question. But "something quite different" may arise after a director has considered all the evidence contained in the libretto, the music, the stage directions, and the drawings, just as different conclusions will be reached by different singers and conductors who come to interpret the score. No doubt Schoenberg not only saw but heard the piece during those seventeen days of manic creativity, in the summer of 1909, when he is alleged to have written it down. But what did he hear: Jessye Norman's performance or Anja Silja's? James Levine's or Pierre Boulez's? The score, even a score as finely detailed as that of "Erwartung," can't tell the whole story, and no more can the instructions and guidances presented to the director. If we seem to trust the musical prescriptions more than the dramatic ones, the reason lies more in the relative developments of notation and of perception than in any principle. There are a million ways of performing any phrase in Schoenberg's score, and a million ways of bringing the moon onto the stage. The life of any art depends on there being always the possibility of "something quite different."

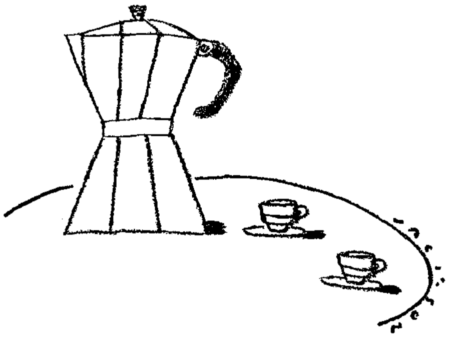
That's certainly what we get from Robert Lepage in his new production of "Erwartung," for the Canadian Opera Company. The work is being given as an antithesis or sequel to Bartók's "Bluebeard's Castle" (the double bill has three performances at the Brooklyn Academy of Music this week), and Mr. Lepage takes advantage of the three supernumeraries needed for the Bartók opera to increase the dramatis personae of Schoenberg's "monodrama." When the performance starts, in silence, the Woman is cowering at the side of a bare wall while a man in a white coat sits ready to take notes. One's heart sinks at the prospect of an "explanation" of the work as psychoanalytic session: that was where "Erwartung" began, in the experiences of its librettist, Marie Pappenheim, as a medical student in turn-of-the-century Vienna, and not where it ended, or should end. However, the realism is there only to be turned into the chilled, poised surrealism of Mr. Lepage's production, which demands, and gets, feats of gymnastic control from his extras. The next time we see the psychiatrist—the set repeatedly darkens, to focus on the Woman and allow nimble scene-shifting—he's still sitting, but bizarrely turned through ninety degrees, as if the wall were his floor, while another man, later identified as the Woman's lover, dangles alarmingly through a hole in the wall, supported by only one heel.

But wait a moment. Schoenberg's stage directions unambiguously indicate that the action takes place in a forest. And his letter to the Berlin director insists that it has to be "a real forest," because the Woman is afraid of the forest, and how could anyone be afraid of something that isn't real? How? All too easily, one might want to answer—and add that real things might easily inspire awe, or fright, or alienation, but that fear is much more likely to be engendered by what isn't real. This is dangerous ground, but there's some justification for regarding Schoenberg's requirement in this instance as naïve, and for concluding that what's most important, to him and to the work, is not the forest but the fear. If we can take that step, then Mr. Lepage's re-situation of the opera in a coldly lit dream space, where one perturbing image glides into darkness to be replaced by another, can be hailed as a realization of, if not Schoenberg's intentions, then the intentions behind his intentions. What helps settle the issue is not only the precision of the execution but the tightness of Michael Levine's designs and Robert Thomson's lighting.

What further helps is the proof—in the large number of Schoenberg's and Pappenheim's ideas taken on board—that Mr. Lepage's ambition is to render the piece as accurately as possible, and not simply to create "something quite different." The moon—that potent symbol of Viennese musical expressionism, of light after the sunset of tonality—is present in the form of a wildly floating illuminated globe, which strikingly helps create the double space at the beginning, of open night sky and clinic. Later, in the episode in which the Woman thinks she has stumbled upon her lover's body but then decides that what she saw or felt was only a log, Mr. Lepage presents both objects in turn, and so in this case exceeds Schoenberg's literalism, since the stage directions remain silent on how, if at all, the Woman's confusion is to be realized. (This silence is perhaps more evidence of the composer's uncertainty about how to stage fear.) In the fourth scene, which occupies the whole second half of the piece, the house Schoenberg wanted visible at the back of the stage is duly present, in a powerful image: it's a small-scale cutout, with the arm of another woman reaching out through one of the windows to lure the lover in.

For the earlier scenes, the production's imagery had been generally static around the Woman, as if we as spectators were watching a Magritte slide show with a single living, breathing human being caught up in each of the frames. Now, in the final, fullest, and climactic scene, the stage begins to draw itself into movement, as an appropriate response to how the libretto and the music begin to root the Woman's fears in her lover's presumed or actual affair with a rival—the woman "with white arms," as she is repeatedly described, perhaps in a reference to the Tristram story. Once again, Mr. Lepage's staging, though visually as far from Schoenberg's milieu as nineteen-thirties Paris or Brussels, takes care with the images that are important in the text.

The scene slips to inside the house; the lover is pulled in through the window by the other woman, and they tumble together up the stage and onto a bed. None of this is in the score, of course, but it's plausibly the reason for what is in the score, the reason for the music's gathering pressure toward its bursting point. And there, in a gesture that none but a master of the stage could have achieved without bathos, the Woman kills her lover, using the only weapon that could allow both a violent slicing action and an aim at the genitals: a scythe. After this, in the adagio, whose length is extraordinary by the quick-flicker tempo standards of the piece, the lover's naked body rolls slowly down the stage, with the Woman stumbling after watchfully as she sings. The whole sequence, from bed through murder to threnody, has an acute force, for which it depends squarely on how well it fits the trajectory of the music.



Contact between the stage and the score is further enforced by Rebecca Blankenship's imposing performance as the Woman: she nurtures her phrases, never makes do with hysteria, and sustains the dislocation from surrounding events that the production seems to require from her—the sense that she's wandering through actions remembered. Richard Bradshaw's conducting effectively feels for the delicacy—the lunar-light delicacy—of the score, though some of the orchestral detail was lost in the wide space of the O'Keefe Centre, in Toronto. Perhaps the sound will be fuller and stronger at BAM.

THE evening's other work, "Bluebeard's Castle," is a well-chosen companion piece. It's not just the closeness of date that matters here (Bartók's opera was written only two years after Schoenberg's) but the proximity of subject and treatment. Both pieces are couple dramas, even if in "Erwartung" one member of the couple is missing and presumed dead. Both, too, gradually reveal a past in which other people—specifically, other women—were involved. Both expose a chasm of incomprehension: between the two characters in "Bluebeard," between the Woman and her own past in "Erwartung." And both are operas in which the essential action is interior. When they are given in the Canadian order, "Erwartung" can seem to follow as one symbolical act after another: Judith loses the chance of a relationship with Bluebeard because she demands to know all the truth about him; the Woman in "Erwartung" goes in pursuit of a lost past after she has seen or guessed the truth of her lover's unfaithfulness. This is the connection suggested by the design, for both works are presented as dramatic parables, within a great gilt frame around the stage opening, and the wall of "Erwartung" is all that remains after the dark tunnel or corridor of the "Bluebeard" set has disintegrated.

It could be that Mr. Lepage and Mr. Bradshaw are interested in the Bartók opera principally as a prologue, since the orchestral sound in this grandly inventive score was dim and disconnected (and denatured in the magnificent central section by a weedy organ), while the

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staging is not at all a reinvention in the manner of "Erwartung." The spoken introduction is cut, but that's a common act of wisdom, and the narrator's message, that what we're about to see is a fable, is retained by the frame and by the first image seen within it: a miniature Gothic castle rotating in darkness and distance. Once Bluebeard and Judith have gone into the picture, after delivering their first lines in front of the frame, there's nothing exceptional about the realization of the ambience the opera needs: an oppressive square-sectioned space coming toward the front of the stage from a faintly lit portcullis entrance, with the seven doors along the left wall and unbroken masonry along the right. (This right wall is what will remain after the intermission.)

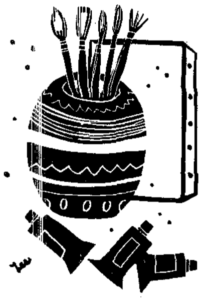
The stage inventions for the openings of the doors—virtually the sole happenings in the opera—are disappointingly tepid: a patch of flamelike light for the torture chamber; for the jewel house, a handful of pearls, which, in a limp gesture, Judith scatters to the ground; a projection of the planet Earth for Bluebeard's domains; a lake of tears that Judith can coyly dabble her hand in. Throughout, the lighting, which is so crisply managed in "Erwartung," obscures its own creations when follow-spots get in the way. Only for the final opening does the production heat up, as Bluebeard's three former wives seem to rise up through the tear lake, though what drenches their wedding gowns is blood. Here the orchestra, too, at last begins to sound excited, especially in the climactic passage, where Judith takes her place with her predecessors. Up to this point, what has kept the performance on track is the almost unsupported strength of the singers: Jane Gilbert is a noble Judith, determined and always richly voiced, and Victor Braun holds to a gray lyricism as a Bluebeard scarred and numbed by experience, never believing he can escape his fate.

It's possible that Mr. Lepage intends more for his production than just to provide a casing for two excellent singing actors to work within: in interviews, he and his designer spoke of letting the blood flow, and of having the surtitles projected onto the set, even onto the characters. (But then why not perform these two sung dramas in translation, whatever the difficulties in finding English equivalents for the hard initial consonants and the insistent trochaic rhythms of "Bluebeard's Castle"?) There may therefore be some changes by the time the company reaches BAM—though none are needed in the astonishing, and astonishingly controlled, "Erwartung."

SOMETHING else revealed by the advance publicity was that Brian Dickie, the general director of the Canadian Opera Company, had originally gone to Mr. Lepage with the idea that he should stage a "Ring," but that Mr. Lepage had sensibly decided his opera début ought to be in something a little less colossal. The Lyric Opera of Chicago has made a much safer choice in entrusting its new "Ring" to the experienced hands of August Everding, John Conklin, and Zubin Mehta, though one might well prefer bold mistakes to safe indecisiveness, particularly after getting a glimpse of what's in store.

Opening with "Das Rheingold" ("Die Walküre" is promised for next season), the production looks set on a course toward a mediocrity alleviated only by some impressive singing. The second scene brought the definitive moment, at the point where the assembled gods are waiting for the spirit of fire, who will tell them what to do. As in the opera at this juncture, a lot of diverse forces have been brought together—in the cast, in the orchestra, in the design elements—but the ignition has yet to arrive. Mr. Mehta conducts an extraordinarily thin-textured performance, one that, in its disconcerting starts and stops, suggests old-fashioned accompanied recitative, and that never lifts to embody or empower the music. Mr. Everding's production goes through prosaic encounters of stereotypes. (The interpretation of Fricka as a wheedling mommy is grotesque, and no help to Tatiana Troyanos's performance.) Mr. Conklin's visual ideas are borrowed from hither and yon, and just dumped in a clutter onto the stage.

The collage quality of the production is revealed at once, in the imagery displayed during the orchestral prelude: first, a huge projection of a faintly pre-Columbian mask with a flanged, ridged skull and a broken nose (only at the end of the opera does the apparition of Erda finally suggest that this is her signature), then the three Norns spinning a rope of blue light, then the Rhine (a water photograph at the back of the black, grille-sided box in which everything takes place) and her maidens. These last are doubled—and this is the production's one thrill—by three flying acrobats in elasticized harnesses, using the great height of the Chicago stage opening to dart and bounce and flutter with marvellous agility. Even this display, though, is not as magical as it might have been without the efforts to disguise the machinery, and there's a similar not quite achieved feel to other aspects of the staging. For no very good reason, the scenes in the gods' world incorporate a Japanese-style low rectangular enclosure painted in cinnabar red. The giants are shadowed by immense framework puppets, also somewhat Japanese in look, but, with nothing in their handling to take over from the initial surprise, they quickly become redundant. Like the mermaid circus of the first scene, the puppetry falls victim to the timing compelled by the music: there isn't space here for theatrical interventions that demand their own rhythm. Then, too, the costumes are all over the place: long black robes and purple sashes that make the giants look like a couple of monsignors, a Fricka done up in decadent splendor as cousin to Herodias, Froh and Donner in bikers' leathers, Freia in a flow of orange and white devised all too obviously to look good when, as so often, she flees.



The muddle extends even to such basic elements of the piece as the placing and presence of Valhalla: what we're shown is a pair of gargantuan towers (nothing like Wotan's model, a thing once again of a footling japonaiserie), which the lighting can make disappear into or reappear from one or the other of two different mountainscapes. The relatively confined space onstage may be a problem, but that alone can't account for the production's weakness in creating spectacle. Alberich's self-transformations, for instance, are shadow plays that confess their own inadequacy, and the scene changes—including the extra scene changes required by the unnecessary opening images—are effected behind dropped screens.

The vocal virtues are, in the circumstances, fortunate, if not entirely unpredictable, since wherever an obvious choice was possible Chicago has made it, casting James Morris as Wotan, Ekkehard Wlaschiha as Alberich, Matthias Hölle as Fasolt. Still, the results are impressive. Mr. Morris comes to the Lyric Opera having sung his role everywhere from San Francisco to Covent Garden, and on two recordings, but he remains fastened to and driven by the urgency of Wotan's dilemma: carrying no hint of discomfort through a hefty stretch of impressively hefty singing, he can afford to color the occasional attack with a grating strength, and, if anything, he sounds more purposeful than he has before. Mr. Wlaschiha's severe, black voice and presence can't reach to the lubricity of the opening scene, but thereafter this is a stark portrayal. And Mr. Hölle produces sound and phrasing of a ravishing quality, to suggest in Fasolt the pride and perfection of the humble.

Equally admirable are some of the younger singers. Dennis Petersen, especially, brings a sudden burst of life to the stage in his appearance as Mime: his singing is quick and sure, and is neatly characterized without being turned into a croak, while in his acting he leaps out from the slough of the production. Nancy Maultsby is splendidly firm and strong all the way down to Erda's depths. Mark Baker is a lustrous Froh, and Hillevi Martinpelto a touching Freia. And Bryn Terfel brings his musicality, burly eagerness, and confident vocal force to the part of Donner, which seems far too small a space for a singer of his distinction to be crammed into.

The opera is always waiting to be stolen by Loge, and this fumbling production has nothing to put in his way. Barry McCauley sings the part with a Heldentenorish resolution, and though his acting tends to be careful, he easily has the last laugh as the gods climb into Valhalla through a piece of heavy-handed symbolism the production has already used. When Alberich was sitting in the middle of his hoard, there were red stakes behind the ingots. Now red poles emerge through the gold of the stairway to Heaven. We may be sure, oh yes, there'll be blood to come in this production as the story unfolds. It isn't an enticing prospect. ♦

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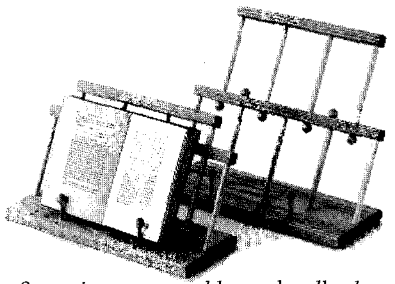

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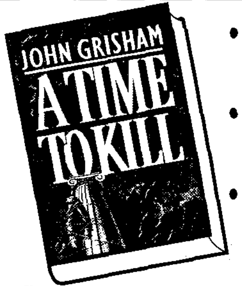

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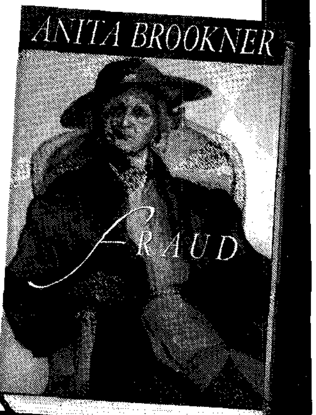


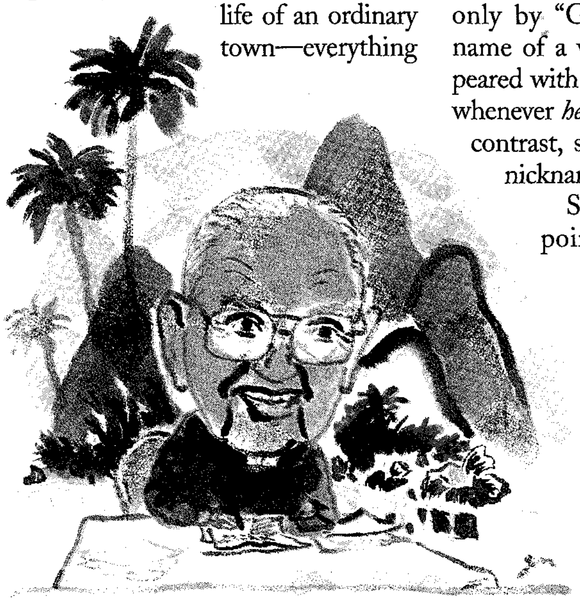
RANDOM HOUSE

BOOKS

HAVE A GREAT DAY

BY VERLYN KLINKENBORG

DURING the nineteen-fifties, in small-town middle-American Methodist households, self-reliance was taken for granted. But it was also felt that there was a limit to local resources, and help would be welcome in certain areas of life. Much of that help came over the radio. From the airwaves you could learn almost everything that pertained to the civil, secular life of an ordinary town—everything you needed to keep lawns green, children healthy, cars tuned, and corn sweet and early. But if the radio was good for those things it was still better—being immaculate and private—as a religious supplement. Protestants are natural Sabbatarians, with a vividly secular sense of the weekday, and it was possible even for churchgoing Protestants to feel that a small-town service did not quite use up all the holiness of a Sunday. So radio filled in, and the voice of Norman Vincent Peale was heard in the land.



Norman Vincent Peale: "God's Salesman" looks at the man behind the power of positive thinking.

GERARD NICOLAS

Peale is now ninety-four, which is not much older than I imagined him to be when I first heard him as a child, so authoritative and sanctified seemed the presence emanating from the radio speaker. (My parents also subscribed to Peale's "inspirational self-help magazine," called *Guideposts*, which seemed a little like a *Popular Mechanics* for the soul.) A hush may have settled over our house when Peale came on the air, but if so, I don't remember it. What I do remember is the resonance of the name: Norman Vincent Peale. Those syllables sounded like the essence of ecclesiasticism to me. As a clerical moniker, "Norman Vincent Peale" was rivalled only by "George Beverly Shea," the name of a well-known singer who appeared with the evangelist Billy Graham whenever *he* was on the radio. "God," in contrast, sounded like an impertinent nickname.

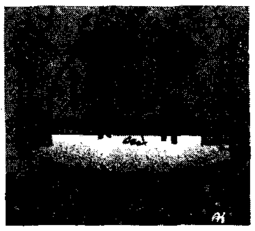
So it was with some disappointment that I read Carol George's new biography of Peale, "God's Salesman: Norman Vincent Peale and the Power of Positive Thinking" (Oxford; $23). Ms. George, who is a professor of history at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, has written a thorough, scholarly book, which positions Peale among the split hairs of Protestant theology. "God's Salesman" feels slightly cloistered in the reading, although Peale is a worldly man, and although the book has a sense of destiny fulfilled running through it which you usually find only in the autobiographies of statesmen and starlets. But the disappointment I felt was not so much with Ms. George, who merely dispelled the reverent ignorance of my childhood. It was with God's salesman himself, who turns out to be not quite the oracular presence I remembered. Norman Vincent Peale did more to Americanize Christianity than any other person in the twentieth century. He did it without fraud, but Ms. George reminds the reader what an ambiguous accomplishment it really was.

At the height of his powers, in the mid-nineteen-fifties, Peale, according to *Life*, preached "to probably the largest audience ever gathered by an American cleric." Twice on Sundays, he addressed the congregation of Marble Collegiate Church, on the corner of Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan, where he had been minister since 1932 (and would continue to preside until 1984). Crowds waiting to be seated in the church or in its overflow auditorium often filled the sidewalks outside Marble Collegiate when Peale was scheduled to preach. In 1955, *Life* stated that Peale's "syndicated newspaper column reportedly attracted 10 million weekly readers; his weekly radio program produced 3 million listeners; *Guideposts* magazine claimed 500,000 subscribers . . . and there was The Power of Positive Thinking, which in two-and-a-half years on the best-seller list sold over a million copies." (Peale's influence is still widely felt, through the Peale Center for Christian Living, based in Pawling, New York, and through *Guideposts*, whose circulation in 1990 reached nearly four million.)

What lay behind those numbers was not exactly charisma—at least, not as the word is most often used in theology. Peale wasn't the kind of orator in whom you sensed a luminescent divinity, though he was personally popular with his audiences, as well as with men like Eddie Rickenbacker, E. F. Hutton, Lowell Thomas, Branch Rickey, Richard Nixon, and Ronald Reagan. Peale was a small man with the slightly pursy expression of a diehard Babbitt, who had been raised on the temperance battles that were so important to the self-esteem of Midwestern Protestants early in this century. He was a born-and-bred Republican who had a taste for conservative activism that often got him into rather foolish trouble. (It was the so-called Peale Group that made Kennedy's Catholicism a public issue during the 1960 Presidential campaign.) According to his biographer, Peale has a "phlegmatic personality." But the older he gets the more the camera finds him smiling.

The son of a Methodist minister, Peale grew up in Ohio and attended Ohio Wesleyan and the Boston University School of Theology. His first ministries were in Brooklyn and Syracuse, New York, but he spent most of his adult life in Manhattan, where, according to Ms. George, he "dressed in bespoke suits while appearing the small-town banker with a Will Rogers accent." His true parish was what H. L. Mencken called "the mail-order belt," and his denomination was sui generis, though he began his career as a Methodist and joined the Reformed Church in America when he went to Marble Collegiate. He lived on the Upper East Side for most of his life, but when Peale felt like insulting Eleanor Roosevelt he said that "her knowledge of the United States does not go west of the Hudson River."

Peale's success arose from his ability to raise money and fill pews, and from his message—a practical, can-do Christianity almost perfectly suited to America's common denominator. "The human race," Mencken said, "seems doomed to run, intellectually, on its lowest gear," and among the "Ambassadors of Christ" to our dim species Mencken included "Fifth Avenue rectors with shining morning faces, preaching on Easter to pews packed with stockbrokers." Peale had a shining morning face, he preached on Fifth Avenue, he loved businessmen, and he would have seen nothing wrong with Mencken's description, except its implication. Peale proudly called himself a "missionary to American business," not because business particularly wanted missionaries but because Peale, who liked to think of himself as "a man's man," enjoyed the company of businessmen. ("Jesus Christ always gets real men," he once said.) Peale also believed what every working day disproves: that success in business is evidence of moral virtue. On the radio, in print, and in person, he made his pitch as if he were working on commission. "You would not say, 'Well this is a pretty good car, and let me check my manual and I can tell you more about it,' " he once explained in an interview. "No, you would look him in the eye and say, 'Look friend, this is it, and Bill Smith got one, and this one is just like it and it is the best.' "



Peale wrote some three dozen books, among them "You Can Win," "Sin, Sex, and Self-Control," and "Have a Great Day." But the essence of Peale's philosophy can be found in his 1952 best-seller, "The Power of Positive Thinking," which was one of the earliest and most important drops in the great ocean of modern self-help literature. Peale calls "The Power of Positive Thinking" a book of "applied Christianity," as though regular Christianity were a set of abstruse theorems, useless unless put in the hands of a civil engineer. There is nothing abstruse about "The Power of Positive Thinking." It is a loose collection of affirmative anecdotes—the kind now associated with Ronald Reagan—about persons who took Peale seriously when he urged them "to study prayer from an efficiency point of view" and whose lives were changed by positive thought. The book has chapter titles like "Stop Fuming and Fretting" and "When Vitality Sags, Try This Health Formula," and it contains ninety-three numbered suggestions for bringing what Peale calls "the Higher Power" into your daily life.

In a scientific age, it was almost inevitable that Peale would try to sell Christianity by calling it scientific. But Peale means by "science" what most people mean by "dogma." Christianity, he explains, "has the characteristics of a science in that it is based upon a book which contains a system of techniques and formulas designed for the understanding and treatment of human nature." You can hear the pseudo-technological accent of contemporary advertising everywhere in "The Power of Positive Thinking," an accent that is part of what Ms. George calls the "increasingly contextual" nature of Peale's message. "Flush out your thoughts," Peale writes, "give yourself a clean mental engine, remembering that a clean mind, even as a clean engine, always delivers power." When he really stretches, Peale can put together what sounds like a passage from the operating manual for all creation, and yet behind it there lies nothing more than the innocuous sloganeering of a nineteen-fifties ad campaign: "The conservation of energy depends upon getting your personality speed synchronized with the rate of God's movement."

No one ever spent more time reading the Bible to less literary effect than Peale. As a writer, he is the James Michener of Protestantism. Early in "The Power of Positive Thinking," for example, Peale pauses to describe the balm of nature, in which the reader is meant to see God's "genius and skill." What we see instead is the work of

God's travel agent. "As I write these words," Peale begins, "I am on a balcony of one of the most beautiful hotels in the world, the Royal Hawaiian on the famed and romantic Waikiki Beach. . . . Hibiscus, of which on these islands there are two thousand varieties, fill the garden. . . . The incredible blue ocean surrounding these islands stretches away to the horizon. . . . It has an indescribably healing effect upon me as I sit here writing about the power generated in a peaceful mind." Peale is partial to superlatives that actually diminish the subject: he calls Edison, for instance, "the world's greatest inventive wizard." He's particularly fond of constructions in which a noun takes the place of an adjective: he speaks of having "an unhappiness thought" or a "defeat psychology" or, best of all, a "technique strategy against worry." He urges his readers to "Prayerize . . . Picturize . . . Actualize." There is, to me, something ineffably redolent of the fifties in this language, a kind of Madison Avenue smartness, which is in fact one of the least conservative elements of Peale's ministry.

BUT the distance between the traditional force of the Bible's language and the colloquial prose of "The Power of Positive Thinking" is also a good measure of how far, by mid-career, Peale had travelled from his religious upbringing. The path from even such a warm sect as Methodism to the ebullient, openhearted, but almost secular fraternity created by Peale is not an obvious one. And if his message is not as original as his manner of presenting it, there was still, for a young man born into the hard groove of Ohio parsonage life, one significant discovery to be made before he could adapt his father's religion to the world he saw around him when he began his ministry, in the nineteen-twenties.

As an undergraduate at Ohio Wesleyan, which one alumnus said "was a little sticky with sentimentalism" in those days, Peale read Emerson and William James, for whom he found a special use. They offered him a means of thinking about the innate power of what Emerson called the soul, James called "the subliminal self," and Peale himself later called "positive and consecrated personality." Emerson and James first helped Peale turn his religious scrutiny inward, toward the nature of the soul, rather than outward, toward the nature of God. Through their writings as well as through more conventional theology, Peale came to believe deeply in the capacity of man to be transformed—patently a liberal faith. The transcendentalist, Emerson wrote, almost as if thinking of Peale, "believes in the perpetual openness of the human mind to new influx of light and power." But Peale, like the majority of Protestant clergymen who opposed the New Deal, also felt that it was man's duty to transform himself. When Peale quotes Emerson and James in "The Power of Positive Thinking"—and in that context they sound a little like two philologists who have wandered into a used-car lot—he does so to emphasize the radical force of belief. Peale's political and social conservatism is a counterpoint and a constraint to his profound, perhaps frightening sense of the regenerative, almost revolutionary power of the inner person.

Emerson and James did nothing, of course, to reinforce the hold of traditional Christian doctrine on Peale's mind. There's something impressive, even now, about the hubris with which Peale used them to reduce the entire edifice of established religion to a set of sweet nostrums. (Strange as it sounds, Ms. George isn't completely off the mark when she compares Peale, stung by his critics after the publication of "The Power of Positive Thinking," to Emerson after his Harvard Divinity School address in 1838.) Peale was ruthless in the way he trimmed Christianity to fit the circumstances of middle-class American life, purging the Bible of history, metaphysics, poetry, revelation, and complexity. He condemned intellectual, liberal Protestantism as a kind of "nicey-nicey-ism," yet in "The Power of Positive Thinking" you cannot find "the strong, narrow Protestantism" that Peale publicly endorsed during the Kennedy-Nixon campaign, for instance. To practice Peale's "applied Christianity," you need not have even the simplest conception of sin or grace or redemption—just a vivid sense of the secular problems of modern life and an awareness of your own suffering. "Pray big! Believe big! Act big!" Peale shouted to the crowd gathered at the National Convention of Christian Men in 1956. In Peale's books, God always seems a little diminished.

The temptation—at least, for one who grew up to the sound of Peale's voice—is to regard Norman Vincent Peale less as a figure out of Mencken than as a figure out of Trollope, who knew in what bewildering shapes virtue often appears. It's easy enough to poke fun at Peale, and it's not hard to see that the optimism he expresses in "The Power of Positive Thinking" flatters his audience. Every self-help book defines a heaven and a hell, and Peale's hell—the hell of modern life—is filled with people suffering from all sorts of problems, but never from absolute want. Their golf balls land in the rough, they can't quit smoking, they may be fooling around a little on the side, they lack confidence. "The Power of Positive Thinking" seems peopled by a doctor's waiting room full of Cheever characters, all suffering from suburban anomie. And yet Peale's patients—strangers and parishioners, businessmen and housewives, young and old alike—are not so resolute in despair as Cheever people.

It's tempting to think that the runaway success of "The Power of Positive Thinking" somehow measures the emptiness of life at the beginning of the Eisenhower era. But optimism like Peale's is contagious only among the already optimistic, among people who just want reminding that life is what you make it. Peale understood that Americans, collectively, cannot comprehend tragedy, and always prefer good news to bad. Though he filled his books with blather, at least it was cheerful blather, and cheerfulness is only an intellectual sin. Even his chauvinism seems venial in retrospect. Peale's best defense when he overstepped himself in politics was to say, "I was not duped—I was just stupid." He wanted to be "a hard-boiled fellow" who cultivated "the real boys," yet his audience was largely female. At times, he gave the impression of being a preacher who wasn't satisfied with the pulpit at all, of one who would rather have hit the road in a sedan with a sample case in the trunk and a row of suits and shirts hanging on a rod across the back seat. Now, well beyond his Biblical sum of years, he is a complacent answer to a question that Emerson once intended in a doubtful spirit: "Where are the old idealists?" ◆

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

The Man Who Was Late
by Louis Begley (Knopf; $21)

MR. BEGLEY'S second book is, like "Wartime Lies," a novel about performance; here, however, the protagonist is not a Jewish boy pretending to be Catholic in Nazi Poland but a postwar Jewish refugee attempting to please a less compelling audience, the East Coast establishment. Although Ben jokes that his accomplishments are always achieved too late to be properly enjoyed, they are nonetheless impressive: honors at Harvard, marriage to a beautiful woman of good family, partnership at a prestigious New York investment bank, a coveted appointment to the Paris office. His personal happiness is more elusive. His wife leaves him, and he drifts, dangerously unanchored, until he falls in love with the unhappy wife of a French lawyer—an affair that proves disastrous. References to Ben's wartime childhood remain oblique throughout, as though to deny him any easy excuse for his slavish preoccupations with manners and tailors and restaurants and addresses, or his addiction to the oblivions of sex. Yet the society from which Ben strives so hard to win favorable judgment is almost as impalpable as the past he's fleeing: his performance is exhausting and brilliant, yet seemingly executed before an empty theatre. We pity Ben, but the author scrupulously makes it impossible for us to love him. This flaw becomes part of the novel's muffled horror.

Daughters of the House
by Indrani Aikath-Gyaltsen (Ballantine; $18)

THIS fine first novel, set in the countryside of India, tells the story of a household of women living in tumbledown gentility by the side of a river; men pass through only long enough to beget children—invariably daughters. It's the kind of house where the singed part of the lampshade is always turned to the parlor wall and the creaky sixth stair is never fixed. This matriarchal bliss is shattered when one of the women, the beautiful aunt of the novel's spirited eighteen-year-old narrator, introduces a husband into the family. What begins as the narrator's amusing campaign of passive resistance darkens when sickness and betrayal invade the house and she learns that houses and families can devour as well as sustain.

GENERAL

Tragic Mountains: The Hmong, the Americans, and the Secret Wars for Laos, 1942-1992
by Jane Hamilton-Merritt (Indiana; $29.95)

THE author was a correspondent in Southeast Asia in the nineteen-sixties when she first encountered the Hmong, the tribes living in the mountains that run up the spine of Indochina. An ethnic minority in several countries, they have preserved their identity for four thousand years. They resisted the Japanese occupation during the Second World War, and afterward sided with the French; while the French left them alone, the Vietnamese coveted their territory. Thus they became involved in the Cold War, and were later recruited by the C.I.A. and various United States military advisory groups for guerrilla-type tasks, such as monitoring traffic on the Ho Chi Minh trail and rescuing downed American airmen. After the United States left Southeast Asia, the Hmong were exposed to vengeance amounting to genocide. This account of the steps by which an indigenous people has been brought to the edge of destruction is painful, and intentionally so. Ms. Hamilton-Merritt wants Americans to aid Hmong in Thai refugee camps, and to exert diplomatic pressure on the governments of Laos and Vietnam, which are seeking our friendship.

The Jazz Scene
by Eric Hobsbawm (Pantheon; $25)

A NEW and thoroughly revised edition of a book that was first published in England in 1959: a historical overview of jazz—"that remarkable noise," in the author's words, "from the Mississippi Delta which has . . . conquered an astonishing range of geographical and social territory." Mr. Hobsbawm is a noted British historian who is a devoted, undoctrinaire amateur of jazz in all its forms. His pursuit of the trail of jazz—from its birth, around 1900, in New Orleans—as the idiom of black pop music is carried out with wit and lightly worn erudition. He discusses the phenomenal expansion of jazz in this country and in Europe, the many hybrid forms it has taken, its slang and jive talk, its eclipses and revivals (like the present one), the everlasting struggle of true jazzmen against commercializers, and the men and women who wrote, played, and sang the music—Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Mahalia Jackson, Billie Holiday—and made jazz the liveliest of the arts.

Lucy Stone: Speaking Out for Equality
by Andrea Moore Kerr (Rutgers; $15.95, paper)

THE biographer thinks that Lucy Stone's great role in women's history has been obscured because Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony wrote the "History of Woman's Suffrage" after they broke with Stone. The break had come following the Civil War, when Stanton and Anthony opposed the enfranchisement of black men unless white women were also given the vote. Their racist vituperation sickened Stone, who believed the vote should not be denied to any adult. Stone was born on a Massachusetts farm in 1818, and worked for her education, graduating from Oberlin in 1847. She built a career as a reformer, lecturing and writing against slavery and for women's rights. In 1855, she married Henry Blackwell; the marriage was a lifelong disillusion, and only her forbearance saved it from disaster. She was an exceptionally generous spirit—helping, giving, and forgiving—and was optimistic as well: in her last public speech, in Chicago in 1893, she recalled the gains women had made in her lifetime as a way of encouraging her audience to persevere, to believe in themselves. Ms. Kerr is not an inspired writer, but she does give us a sense of Stone as an inspiring human being.

FROM OUR PAGES

A Violent Act, Alec Wilkinson's report on a murder in the Midwest, has been published by Knopf ($22). Much of the contents originally appeared in *The New Yorker*. ♦

SHOUTS AND MURMURS

A HOLLYWOOD LEXICON

BY DAVID FREEMAN

"You see that piece of shit from the Morris office?"

"Right out of development hell."

"They've got elements. Julia and Geena want in."

"What? I dumped it on my D-Girl for a courtesy read."

"That's going to put you in turnaround. I got the perfect guy for the rewrite."

"They're going to want a woman."

"I'll send over some M.A.W. as a front."

"Gotta go. Gotta buff."

To agents, producers, and executives, a group not distinguished by a sense of irony, a script is either *a piece of shit* (sometimes known as P.O.S.) or "the greatest script ever written." The difference has to do not with literary merit but, rather, with a script's chance of being shot. Screenwriters believe subtler distinctions are possible; they are alone in this view.

EX, LIE
TAPES

Development hell is the limbo that screenwriters endure as their unproduced scripts languish. More than one screenwriter has had a bookbinder wrap his unproduced pages in leather, and has placed the result on a shelf—neither a book nor a movie but a gilded souvenir.

Elements are the above-the-line components of a film deal. ("Above the line" and "below the line" are budget shorthand: "above" means star, director, and script; "below" is everything else.) The key element is usually the star. A script or a screenwriter is never the key element, even though everyone in the movie business flogs the pious cliché that the script is the most important element. The truth is that without the other elements the greatest script ever written is never going to be a movie.

D-Girls—or, occasionally, D-Boys, or Development Sluts—are the hard-charging young executives who work with screenwriters to develop ideas into scripts. D-Girls, who are only occasionally sluts, mostly wear short black skirts, black tights, and black blazers, like Armani versions of the girls who used to hang around Washington Square playing the guitar.

Courtesy read: This term went wide (when a movie goes from a few theatres to many, it "goes wide") after David Mamet used it in "Speed-the-Plow." A courtesy read is a favor; the script courteously read is not taken seriously.

Turnaround was once a term used only by lawyers and agents. Now even people far from Burbank know that a script is in turnaround when it's rejected by the studio that financed it. The word has also gained an additional usage:

"Did Jerry and Trish work it out?"

"He put her in turnaround. It's going to cost him a fortune." (This bit of marital gossip can also be expressed as "He didn't pick up her option.")

M.A.W., for Model-Actress-Whatever, is a play on M.O.W., or movie-of-the-week, a television term. M.A.W.s wear short dresses made of metal and leather and have important hair. They pay a lot of attention to grooming and are at pains to talk about (a) the rain forest (they tend to be for it); (b) feminism (they're on the pro side here, too: not enough good parts for women); (c) the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina (it doesn't look good).

Buff: People in the movie business believe deeply in the power of personal alliances. Each day, all over Hollywood, telephone calls are made apparently to exchange information and gossip. The true purpose, however, is to establish relationships and keep them in good order: to buff them up, just as car detailers continually buff up the BMWs, Mercedeses, and Jaguars of Hollywood's ruling class. These calls are made within status lines. A junior agent at William Morris might call a senior agent across town at I.C.M., but only if there was a specific purpose, easily stated to the senior agent's assistant, never to be called a secretary. Secretaries have jobs; assistants are executives on the make.

The slang changes almost as frequently as studio executives change jobs. Anyone who says he's going to take a meeting, or speaks of Tinseltown, has probably been away for a while. What doesn't change is the way sports, food, excreta, and sex color the language of Hollywood. At any time, an insistent voice might be heard declaring, "You can tell that jerkoff to stick it where he eats. I'll see him at the finish line." ♦

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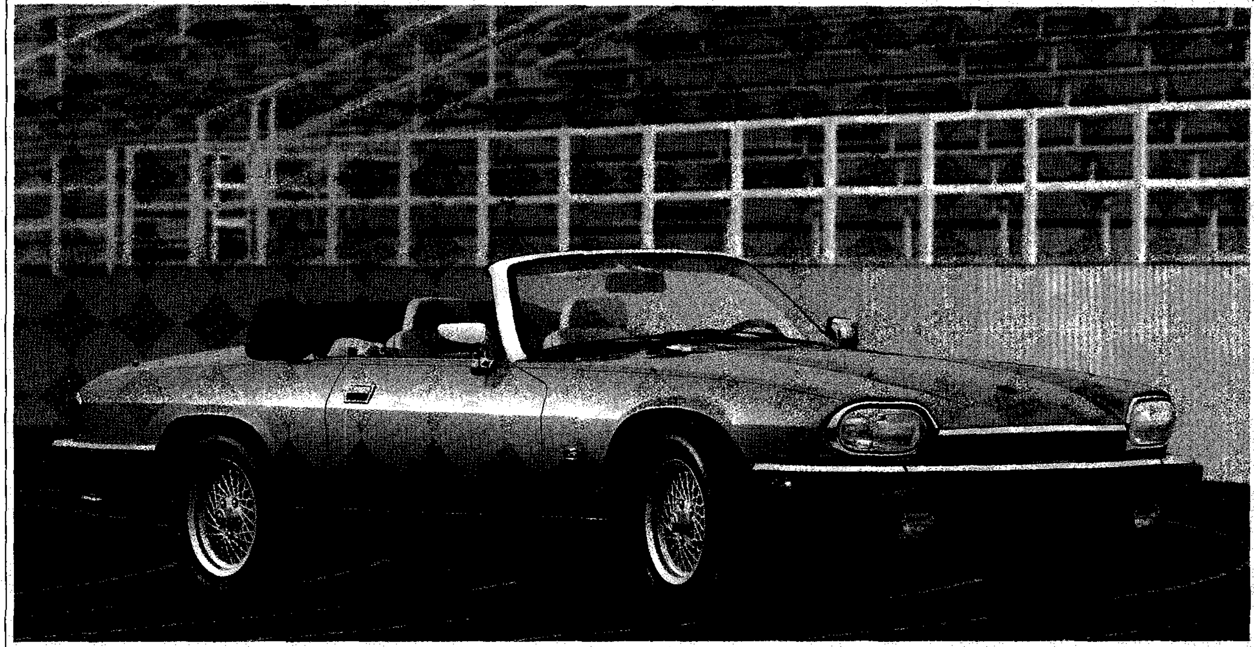

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